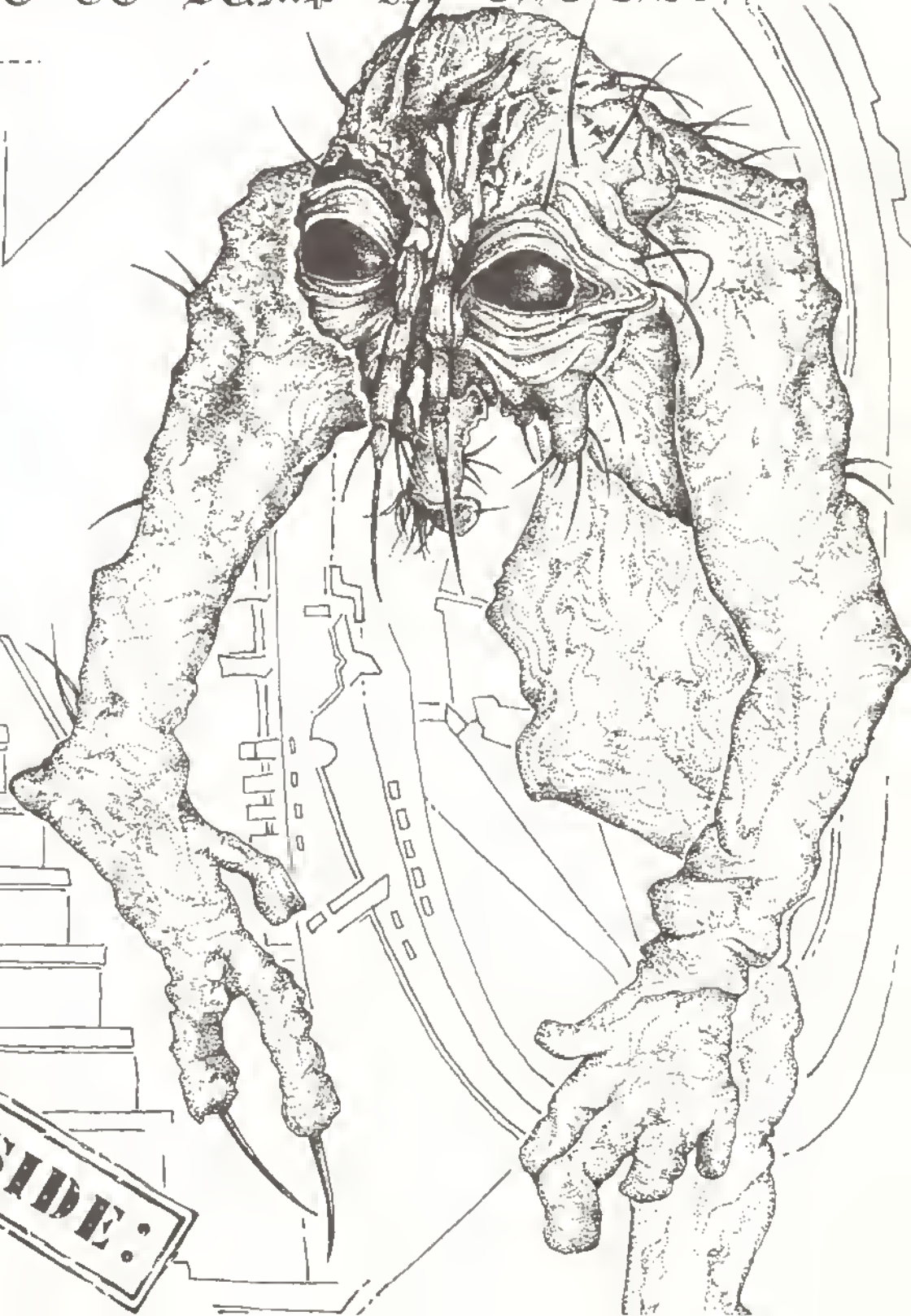


# CAMHAIN

FILMS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT



AXE  
VAMP  
THE FLY  
CRITTERS  
KATE BUSH  
BLOODY MOON  
PEEPING TOM  
SAMANTHA FOX!  
GEORGE ROMERO  
JOHN CARPENTER  
H.P. LOVECRAFT

**INSIDE:**

# HEEERE'S JOHNNY !

WELCOME, and yes I know that in issue one I stated we'd be on sale again in January but better late than never.

When I was preparing the first SAMHAIN I fully intended bringing it out on a bi-monthly basis. At the time I was a reasonably well-paid journalist on a local paper and therefore had the money to meet the printing costs. A small team of contributors (notably Pam Richards, John Martin and Gordon Finlayson to all of whom I'm eternally grateful) were (and indeed still are) providing me with contributions in the way of art work, articles and just general help and all for no charge as, like me, they believe in what we are doing (don't worry this isn't going to end with "So unfortunately SAMHAIN will cease publication") and I was quite happy to go on meeting the costs from my own pocket.

However in October (at about the time the first issue was nearing completion) I was made redundant. My first thought was to drop SAMHAIN then and there but as so much work had gone into it I went ahead and had it printed.

And judging from the response I have had I made the right decision. However it is going to take a while to pick up a regular readership so for the time being SAMHAIN will be brought out on a quarterly basis (that's one issue every three months for anyone like me whose maths isn't what it should be). But as soon as enough money is coming in to cover the costs I fully intend making it a bi-monthly publication and then, who knows? Monthly?

One of the biggest headaches has proved to be distribution. I originally wrote to about 20 specialist shops in the country enclosing a copy of SAMHAIN and an SAE. About five of them had the courtesy to reply. They know who they are and I'm extremely grateful for their help. However if you are thinking of buying the next issue of SAMHAIN then the only way you can guarantee getting a copy is to order it direct from me (see back page) as at present, distribution is, to say the least, patchy.

One thing we have been quite successful in is creating some interest in the media. The magazine, and myself, were featured on BBC2's PAMELA ARMSTRONG SHOW just before Christmas which I found nerve-wracking to say the least but at least it publicised SAMHAIN which was nearly described as meaning "The Unconscious" (no, don't ask me how they worked that out) until I pointed out the correct meaning to Ms. Armstrong. In addition contributor John Martin has appeared on Radio Merseyside plugging the magazine and we've also been featured to a number of newspapers and magazines. And talking of John Martin I really must take this opportunity of thanking him for all his help. Although only credited as a contributing writer his input has gone way beyond the call of duty and in a way SAMHAIN is as much his as mine so thanks a million Johnny. In addition I must apologise to his folks, in advance, for their phone bill when it arrives, long distance editorial conferences tend to start with "I must make this quick because of the phone bill" and end in hush or so later with a lengthy debate on just what Sam Lee Smith did say at the end of HALLOWEEN. I still maintain the word: "What's the boogey man?" although if anyone else has any variations to this I'd be grateful to hear them.

And while I'm in an apologetic mood a quick sorry to Michael Wesley whose name appeared as Martin in the credits of the first issue. I was able to rectify this in the reprints (yes folks, we sold out of the original print run) and I made sure we got it right this time Michael. And also deepest apologies to Pam Richards for not crediting her superb artwork on the front last time round. It was Pam who designed the SAMHAIN logo as well as many of the smaller pieces of artwork in both the first issue and this one and all that on top of Sam Hain (The Hooded One) and as if that wasn't enough she helped me paste up the pages as well.

If you bought the last issue (and if not I want to know why, 300 words on my desk by the end of the week) you'll have noticed a number of items in the "Next Issue" box on the back page haven't appeared, among them "Dracula, Frankenstein and Friends" and "80's Flicks in Pix." Well they haven't been forgotten, just put on hold due to the large volume of contributions received.

You'll also notice that there isn't a competition in this issue but hopefully, space permitting, there will be one in issue three. Incidentally last issue's mystery photos were from DEATH TRAP (the picture on the right) and THE TERROR OF DR. CHANEY. The latter foxed everyone but Sanjiv of Aigborth, Liverpool correctly identified DEATH TRAP and wins the HALLOWEEN 3 poster.

As you'll see we've started a number of new features this issue including COLLECTOR'S CORNER in which you can seek out that particular bit of film memorabilia you are looking for, and a regular fanzine review spot. We've also got a letters page so keep the correspondence coming in as we don't know if we're taking SAMHAIN in the right direction unless you tell us so. Do you want to see novels reviewed or how about soundtracks? Do you want to see more about new films or old? All these questions and more will be answered in the next issue of SAMHAIN. Be there!(Please)

*John Gullidge*

John Gullidge (February 1987)



ISSUE  
No. 2

# SAMHAIN

SPRING  
1987

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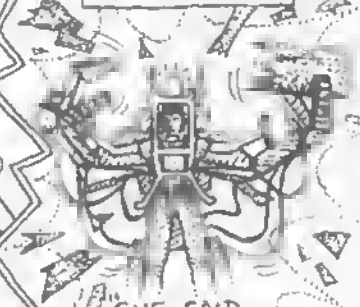
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"IT WAS JUST ANOTHER  
RAINY MONDAY IN THE  
BIG CITY.



"OR SO I THOUGHT...  
UNTIL THIS BROAD  
CAME THROUGH THE DOOR

LITERALLY!



"SHE SAID  
SHE WAS TRYING TO  
TRACE A MISSING NEWT

LADY, ME AND THE RAM  
HERE DONT DEAL IN  
AWOL AMPHIBIANS.

BY THE WAY  
DOLL, PLATFORM  
SHOES ARE OUT.



...! BUT SINCE YOU FEEL  
THAT ABOUT IT, TAKE MY  
PET FROG.



EDITOR, PUBLISHER, WRITER,  
LAYOUT, TYPIST, GENERAL  
DOGS-BODY AND NAGGER OF  
CONTRIBUTORS.  
John Gullidge

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SAM HAIN (THE HOODED ONE)  
AND COVER ART  
Pam Richards

SAMHAIN is published quarterly by John Gullidge from 19, Elm Grove Road, Topsham, Exeter Devon EX3 0EQ. Art and written contributions are welcome but it is advisable to discuss projects with the editor beforehand. SAMHAIN is available free to all contributors and for all published letters and in trade with other film fanzines. All copyrights to the material in SAMHAIN revert to the individual contributor(s). The remainder, unless otherwise stated, is copyright (C) 1987 SAMHAIN.

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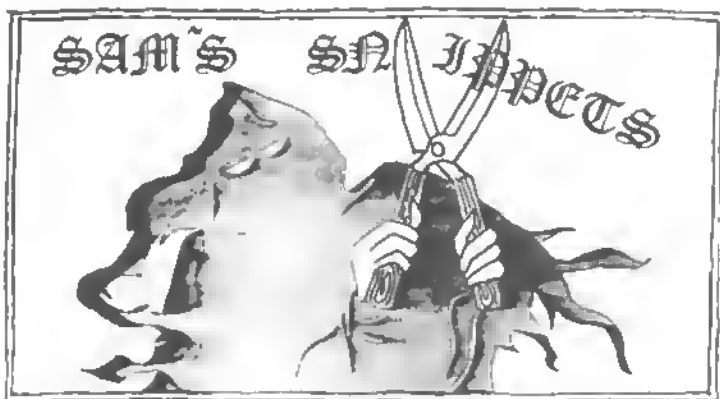
Additional copies of SAMHAIN are available from the editorial address at £1 each which includes postage (USA send International money order to £2).

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This issue is dedicated to Pam (loved the sweatshirts) and John (Whacko!) for their continued help, support, enthusiasm and of course contributions to SAMHAIN both in and out of the pages. And yes I know the last issue was also dedicated to them but I'm that indebted.



FOLLOWING him on the heels of our own coverage on THE PAMELA ARMSTRONG SHOW, and the interview with Ramsey Campbell on BBC2's SATURDAY REVIEW programme Channel 4 got in on the act on February 9 with a programme in the ELEVENTH HOUR series devoted to the films of David Cronenberg (a subject we covered back in November!)

LONG LIVE THE NEW FLESH was a real feast for genre fans featuring, as it did, not only extensive interviews with the Canadian King of Horror but also with Maline Man Stephen King as well as clips from most of Cronenberg's features and other films such as PEEPING TOM and DAWN OF THE DEAD. The question of censorship also reared its ugly head with contributions from James Fearman, Mary Brown (head of Toronto's Censor Board) and Richard D. Heffner (head of the Ratings Administration for the IFAA). But it was Cronenberg's show and with extensive clips from THE FLY proved a delightful appetiser to his latest excursion into the world of the new flesh.....

REMEMBER the old "£10,000 if you die of fright" ad campaigns that were so popular with films like THE PIT and THE PENDULUM? No I don't either but it seems up and coming horror novelist Senn Hutson does. Although he's not offering a reward he has admitted that he would love someone to drop dead reading one of his books. "That would be the ultimate horror" he said. I don't know, I think the mere prospect of having to read the likes of "Slugs" and "Spawn" is pretty horrific.....

YES, I did see SNIP-starring person Pally Tuynbee on "Did You See" enthusing over Channel 4's THE GOURMET in which a bunch of gourmets (chief among whom was THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW's narrator, Charles Gray) ate a human leg.

"It was covered in crackling, just like pork" giggled Pal. Nor the same Pally Tuynbee, you ask, who bored us rigid with her hysterical denunciations of "Video Nasties" in The Guardian Wimin's Page? Yes, dear reader, the self-same prat.....

IF you thought Michael Caine had turned his back on disaster movies you were wrong. Following hot on the heels of his excellent performance in Neil Jordan's masterpiece, MONA LISA, Caine has just started work on JAWS '87 which is set for a July release in the States. No stranger to this type of film he has notched up some notable performances in his time including THE SWARM and BEYOND THE POSEIDON ADVENTURE where the real horror wasn't the dangers of an upturned liner but the prospect of playing opposite Sally Field. Actually JAWS '87 may not be all that bad. Director Joseph Sargent is scrapping all references to JAWS 3D (screened "Flat" by ITV at Christmas) and is aiming for a far more serious movie but then we've heard that before haven't we.....



R.I.P. ELSA LANCHESTER, 1902-1987.

EVER get that feeling of deja vu? It happened to me the other night while I was watching an old episode of THE TWILIGHT ZONE entitled "Little Girl Lost". It concerned....well let Rod Sterling take up the story... "Missing: one frightened little girl, Name: Bettina Miller. Description: six years of age, average height and build, light brown hair, quite pretty. Last seen being tucked in bed by her mother a few hours ago. Last heard - aye, there's the rub, as Hamlet put it. For Bettina Miller can be heard quite clearly, despite the rather curious fact that she can't be seen at all. Present location? Let's say for the moment - in the Twilight Zone."

In fact Bettina (Tracy Stratford) has fallen through a hole into another dimension and the episode involved her father reaching into said hole to rescue the girl while at the same time being held back in our world by a physicist friend of the family who ensured Bettina's old man didn't cross over to the other side. And I thought Spielberg's story for POLTERGEIST was an original one. It would seem it owes more than a passing nod to Richard Matheson's TWILIGHT ZONE script. So what was E.T. based on Stevie?.....

MUCH gnashing of teeth and tearing of hair (by those of us who still have teeth and hair) was occasioned down here in the SAMHAIN office by the announcement of the retirement of the lolly-beautiful Rachel Ward, who apparently now prefers the joys of marriage and motherhood (she is married to F/X MURDER BY ILLUSION star Bryan Brown...second sprog on the way) to the allings and arrows of outraged film critics. Rachel will be fondly remembered by SAMHAINIANS as the femme fatale who adjusted Steve Martin's willy in DEAD MEN DON'T WEAR PLAID, as psycho-killer fodder in CAMPSITE MASSACRE aka THE FINAL TERROR (in which she appeared with the equaffy unknown Daryl Hannah) and, most fondly of all, for her spectacular shower scene in TERROR EYES aka NIGHT SCHOOL, a film favourite with dirty old men of all ages and an official "Video Nasty" to boot (gosh!) - stick around till about issue 15 and we'll be covering this one in POLICE 55. Our best wishes go out to Rachel.....

THERE is no truth in the rumour that ageing Dorothy Lamour's screen comeback in CREEPSHOW 2 will be in the part of The Creep.....



DOROTHY LAMOUR IN CREEPSHOW 2?

IT'S amazing what a letter to the Radio Times can do, following a recent radio production entitled THE MAKING OF FRANKENSTEIN I had to put pen to paper when a clip from the film SAM OF FRANKENSTEIN ("An arm torn out by the roots...") was referred to as a clip from THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN. Needless to say the letter wasn't published but a few weeks later I received a reply from no less an authority on the particular play in question than its author, Ray Hammond. He informed me that the label in the BBC archives on "An evening with Boris Karloff" (from whence the clip came) names the clip as a scene from THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN. However Mr. Hammond did apologise adding that he hoped it didn't spoil my enjoyment of the play. Well it didn't, it just seemed a bit ironic as the play was about a writer concerned with the inaccuracies in a TV version of his Frankenstein documentary.....

AND talking of BBC radio...if you've been following the six part serial, SOME HITCHER'S SON you'll no doubt have spotted the extensive use of background music courtesy of one John Carpenter. The Beeb cribbed some of the best music from the likes of HALLOWEEN and THE FOG and didn't even credit Carpenter. tut tut.....

AS part of the lily-livered BBC's policy of giving in to the ravaging demands of frustrated old cronies, they have announced a proscribed list of films which will never hail in our screens as long as they have anything to do with it. Included are: THE EXORCIST, FRIDAY THE 13TH, ONCE UPON A TIME IN AMERICA, THE STRAW DOLLS, A CLOCKWORK ORANGE (which we all gave up on a long time ago anyway), THE THING (which appeared on ITV last year without causing any viewers to pull their own heads off and erupt with tentacles), DEATH WISH (which ITV has screened more than once) and HALLOWEEN II (which ITV have the rights to). Judging by their absence from this list, it shouldn't be too long before The Beeb treats us to PINK FLAMINGOS, MARK OF THE DEVIL, AI NO CORRIDA and SALO - THE 120 DAYS OF SODOM.

Another aspect of the "Clean up" package now enables BBC make-up artists to complain if they feel too much "Blood" is being used in a fight scene. The full-blown lunacy of these pronouncements can only be appreciated when you consider that they came in the same week as the unfortunate Michael Lush took his spin on the moronic "Whirly Wheel".....



When There's No  
More Room In Hell...

GORDON FINLAYSON

# JOHN CARPENTER'S double shocker

## HALLOWEEN

The trick was to stay alive

## ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

BY MICHAEL WESLEY

# The Films Of John Carpenter

**HALLOWEEN** (1978, and then in young film editor John Carpenter, Halloween would never be quite the same again.

His film of the festival, an 81 were, injected new blood (oh! it's spilling very little) into the horror film genre and put Carpenter firmly on the map.

In recent years his reputation has taken something of a critical nose dive but if, like me, you take what the critics say with a large portion of salt, you'll realise that this is far from the truth. In fact Carpenter has grown immensely as a truly gifted film editor and not just as a mechanical exploder of audience reaction as some would have you believe.

His track record is so strong that whatever lies around the corner looks to be a real treat. I for one will be first in the queue but I do harbour a hope that he may one day return to the smaller, stranger days of films like **HAR STAR** and **BALLROOM**. If nothing else, they would be an interesting counterpart to his big budget spics of later.

**CRIME FEATURES OF JOHN CARPENTER TO DATE:**

**HAR STAR** (1975, 82 minutes)

Carpenter's debut feature concerned the fate of a group of rather depressed, hippy astronauts contending themselves with such problems as a beach ball with claws, a malfunctioning computer, a cynically framed crew-member and, more importantly, a calling book that came to believe it was God. The film was enormously entertaining, if at times rather flat in its pacing and handling, but proved to be an important signpost as to just what the director could do with a little money and a lot of talent.

Probably the scene that most people remember in the one in which Sgt. Pinback (played by Ben O'Neuman, the film's co-writer, in his pre-**ALIEN**, **RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD** days) had to go and feed an alien beast that he had brought on board. The creature resembled a pudgy coloured hunch ball with claws that, after putting up with some eggs from Pinback, turned on his son, by a series of events, eventually leads him to be stuck, first in a lift shaft and then in the lift itself. The scene where Pinback, legs waving wildly out of the bottom of the lift to the tune of "The Barber of Seville", goes up and down the shaft to the delight of the alien, is hilariously effective.

The finale sees both God explode and the two members of the crew who were inside the ship at the time and not instantly killed, both meet highly memorable endings. The first becomes one of the glowing Florida asteroids circling the universe every 12 trillion years, the other ends up on one of the debris to a nearby planet to die in a falling star. This last shot must rank as one of the most hauntingly effective final shots in the history of SF movies (I & K, so it's not quite Robert's Star-Child, but what is?)



**ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13** (1976, 90 minutes)

After his auspicious debut Carpenter turned to a tense drama (revolving a police station under siege by what seemed to be the entire underworld of America. Again low-budget, but again highly effective, the film showed that Carpenter's control of narrative drive, character and action was advancing in leaps and bounds. There was also the flouting suggestion (used more explicitly in **HALLOWEEN**) that the villains were a little bit more than ordinary human beings; they seemed to be able to disappear and reappear at will. Nevertheless, expertly choreographed aside, the bursts of action as the police-men and civilians inside battled with guns and anything within reach to keep them at bay, threatened the film boss a winner.



**SCORPION'S MATCHING HE** (1978 TV Movie, 104 minutes)

American television beckoned next and the result must go down as one of the most successful TV movies ever made. The movie's success as one of the best TV Movie thrillers ever made, was met on a par with Spielberg's **DUEL**. Movies made in a commercial setting, as best, a dubious commodity; slick, no real identity, with formulaic familiar as one's next door neighbour's and hence no real reason. This however was different, a film that seemed to be as it was, highly original, maintaining its director's identity, and with tension on a high throughout. Lauren Bacall played a TV reporter terrorized on her high-rise apartment and Adrienne Barbeau (the future Mrs. C) her friend who was killed in a past twist on **REAR WINDOW**. Rich himself would have been proud of this, even more so the shattering climax, with Carpenter's F.O.F. camera dashing wildly around Bacall's flat as she comes face-to-face with her assassin (a great window-basher finale).

**BALLROOM** (1978, 91 minutes)

**BALLROOM** needs no introduction. In a relatively short space of time it had become the most successful independent action picture of all time carving a niche for itself in the history of horror film at the same time. It introduced Jamie Lee Curtis to the masses as a baby-sitter, Laurie Stride who, on this particular Halloween night, had a little more than a neighbour's irritating habit to contend with. Further, an escaped lunatic (in actual fact the Supremacy) by the name of Michael Myers, who, after decreasing the population of Haddonfield, Illinois by the vast majority of her friends, turns his attention to our likable heroine in a 20 minute climax which was about as edge-of-the-seat as you can get. To be more precise, I cannot recall seeing, before or since, a horror movie in which **BALLROOM** is allowed to explode so powerfully to the last reel.

Adding this was the super camerawork of Dean Cundey; fluid, graceful, beautifully lit, and of course the direction by Carpenter which was truly masterful perfectly complementing his own music score.

that was a pounding, frenetic piece of work that drained the situation home with real force.

Just one complaint, though. The justifiably famous opening five minutes in which the viewer is forced by the walking camera to enter a house, climb the stairs and kill a young girl in her bedroom. It may be powerhouse stuff and has been copied to death since by the likes of the FRIDAY THE 13TH saga but I ask has anyone seen Bob Clark's 1974 film BLACK CHRISTMAS? If you haven't, see it and watch the opening carefully. Duje wot!

#### THE FOG (1979, 90 minutes)

Now regarded as something of a hot-shot director Carpenter's THE FOG (which has nothing to do with James Herbert's novel of the same name despite what some people may think) was, not surprisingly, his biggest budgeted film to date. My own personal favourite of his work it was quite simply a ghost story, told brilliantly with no pretensions, no style and a command of mood, atmosphere and action evident in every frame. It tells the tale (in hushed tones and by camp fire like all the best ghost stories) of a seaside town besieged one night by a supernatural fog within which were enclosed the ghosts of leper pirates coming to claim revenge on the founders of Astoria Bay.

The horror and tension needed to create one of the most spine did film classics I have seen (HALLOWEEN, for all its force, was very one-size and just let the killer bore down on one main character).

Jane Lee Carrille plays a hitchhiker who is picked up by Tom Atchens, who is investigating the disappearance of a fisherman friend of his. Jane Leigh (Jane's mother in real life) plays one of the missing men's wives and Adrienne Barbeau (the Carpenter repertoire company were shaping up nicely by this time) plays the lighthouse radio station disc jockey who first sees the mysterious fog heading toward the town.

At the centre of all this was Father Nelson (Rai Hulsbrook) who discovers in his church (where Carpenter himself makes a Hitchcock-like cameo) the diary of Captain Blake, telling how the ship containing the gold was lured onto the rocks for plunder that established the town.

With all the characters in place and the music having built up beautifully and ably from its opening creep like tale, Carpenter then let rip as the protagonists try desperately to survive and escape the supernatural invasion. Breathhtaking, moody and with a genuinely dark, classy feel to it THE FOG was unquestionably Carpenter and, in my opinion, one of the most underrated horror films of all time.



#### HALLOWEEN II (1981, 92 minutes)

OK, so he didn't direct it but as it was a sequel to his masterpiece it's worth a mention. Indeed it was a great shame that Carpenter only co-produced and wrote the score as the finished film came somewhere near to matching his illustrious predecessor.

The direction was by Nick Moonrath, who has neither before or since, done anything of real note. The film took up the story on the same Halloween night as Laurie (Jane Lee Carrille looking three years older which was of course age was) is taken to the hospital, the bodies of her friends are found and Dr. Loomis (Plesence again) once more goes on his rampage to find Michael Myers.

This time round the film becomes rather a mess as the killer, seemingly recovered from his knife/battering wedge/bullet wounds, backs up again in spite before closing in once more as the pub-up babysitter in the obligatory final conflict.

It was not helped by the decision to go the way of the FRIDAY THE 13TH-type film: the original HALLOWEEN opened, with close-quarters gore and carnage, and the explicitness of it all drove sponsors and tore the film into one long road of sodas. That said, Carrille and Plesence were superb, the score just as exciting as before and the climax in the hospital, although going right into the top in terms of gore and credibility, did deliver. Perhaps now Mr. Strode could collect her babysitting fees and go home.



#### ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK (1981, 94 minutes)

The excellent blipic BLIPIC with Kurt Russell as a geman who is a remarkable performance, was followed by the flawed classic ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK: a significant rise in budget and action but rather a drop in overall effectiveness.

By 1980 New York has become a walled, sealous security prison for the world's criminals and desperadoes. When the president's plane crash lands into it, convicted criminal Snake Plissken (Russell again) is commandeered to go in and get him out within 24 hours. As an incentive to his returning rather than just flying off in his glider, two explosive charges have been placed in his neck arteries ensuring a rather serious headache should he try to escape. Somewhat proved by this he attacks his new "buddy" Lee Van Cleef but it is told that the charges can be neutralised as the last thing if he returns! The rest of the film concentrates on his dangerous journey through the silent labyrinth that is now New York (wasn't it always?) as he searches for the president (Donald Pleasence chelbing up another appearance for Carpenter).

With ESCAPE the director slipped up rather badly. The film is too episodic and over-bloated to ever reach its' full impact and, as such, the whole is much less than the sum of its' parts. Again Cudney's character can be neutralised as the last thing if he returns! The rest of the film concentrates on his dangerous journey through the silent labyrinth that is now New York (wasn't it always?) as he searches for the president (Donald Pleasence chelbing up another appearance for Carpenter).

#### THE THING (1982, 109 minutes)

THE THING was based on a budget which was close to 15 million dollars. A massive production and a massive disappointment, but only in terms of box office and public recognition. Carpenter's remake of Howard Hawks' classic is undoubtedly one of the greatest winter series of all time and possibly his master work. If not this, it is certainly his one descent into visceral horror and, as such, is one of the strongest "Splinter series" ever made.

Kurt Russell, having rescued the president from New York the previous year, turned up again, this time in the Arctic, as a crew member of an expedition which quickly became ravaged by a shape-shifting creature (based on the ice where it landed in its' own ship thousands of years previously).

The film was a near-perfect exercise in building tension and unease, from the opening shot of the flying saucer crashing to earth, and the opening scene of a dog being killed by a helicopter across the brilliantly photographed snowy landscape (Cudney again and his best all time work).

However the chief talking point of the film was not so much the story (rather difficult to follow at times) characters or Carpenter's flawless direction, but rather the unbelievable make-up effects executed by Bob Bottin and his crew, which took both disgust and disbelief in unspooled heights. Indeed, this was the chief reason the film flopped as audiences were over-seeing on what was, on the surface, a squarer (fresh skin of the most incredible proportions. In my view the effects were integral and necessary and scream such as the one in which a character's head lowers to the floor from the neck, sprouts



legs and walks off, were not disgusting, they were rather images of almost awesome surrealism and indeed wonderment and shock rather than a need to reach for the sick bags.

In final analysis the film stands almost unique in the annals of horror.



#### HALLOWEEN III: SEASON OF THE WITCH (1982, 98 minutes)

Having dispatched once and for all with Michael Myers the III/Carpenter production team unleashed HALLOWEEN III into the world and it proved to be one of the most original shockers of the eighties.

Again Carpenter didn't direct but this sequel to the sequel to his masterpiece (albeit in name only) also deserves a mention.

Scripted by Nigel "Quatermass" Kneale (quite brilliantly although enough changes were made for Kneale to insist on removing his name from the credits), co-produced by Carpenter and with music by him as usual, the film was directed by Carpenter's high-school friend Tommy Lee Wallace the production designer, and it proved to be a welcome and radical departure from the previous format.

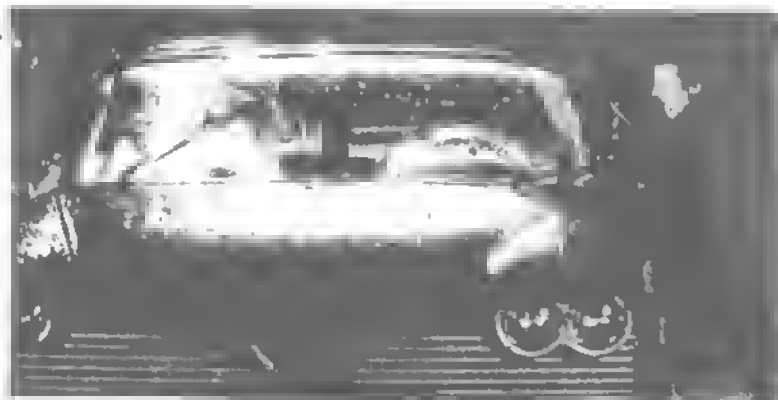
It concerned a mad (supernatural?) Irish toy-maker Causal Curran (the superb Dan O'Herlihy) and his wish to revert Halloween back to the good old Samhainian days of Celtic satirical ceremonies as opposed to a commercial exercise in selling masks and the like. To this end he used arcane magic, part of Stonehenge and computer technology and rubs in his efforts to revenge himself upon a large proportion of America's youth. To explain exactly how would ruin the plot but Tom Atkins played a doctor whose newest patient has his skull structure realtered by a robotic businessman so the doc sets off for Santa Mira with the patient's bereaved daughter to find out just what is going on in the Silver Shamrock toy factory.

The events escalate, as do the deaths, leading to a truly dazzling climax of shock and surprise and a last scene that leaves the audience hanging in mid air. As stated Carpenter didn't direct but his influence is evident in every scene in much the same way as Spielberg's was in Tobe Hooper's POLTERGEIST.

#### CHRISTINE (1983, 110 minutes)

Based on the best selling novel by Stephen King (I've heard that before) CHRISTINE turned out to be a rather superficial film, but entertaining nevertheless, with a very strong performance by Keith Gordon as Arnie Cunningham, the boy obsessed with the red 1958 Plymouth Fury of the title. His transformation from a spotty wimp to a raving, maudlin sophisticate was central to the film's impact as were the amazing scenes (effects by Roy Arbogast and co) of the car regenerating itself every time it was damaged.

The finale was pure Carpenter and very exciting too, but was the last shot of the crushed frame of Christine twinking away to prove it was still alive really necessary?



#### STARMAN (1984, 115 minutes)

Carpenter's attempt to tread Spielberg's yellow brick road in recent years have lost him a number of his followers but nevertheless STARMAN was SF filmmaking at it's best, a sort of adult E.T., maybe not as sophisticated, but a superb substitute for the real thing.

Karen Allen plays a woman sinking into despair while watching home movies of herself and her late husband at her lakeside home. One night a spaceship is shot down by the military and a glowing ball of light emerges, enters her home, and transmutes before her eyes into the only human likeness it can find (that's right, her dead husband!) Understandably distressed by this she faints, awakens to find it all real, and is promptly dragged along by her "Reincarnated lover" played by Jeff Bridges (possibly the performance of his career and a deserved Oscar nominee).

The film then charts the efforts of Mr. Bridges to get back to his spaceship and people while Ms. Allen falls in love with him. All the while the military are closing in (sound familiar?).

A genuinely spectacular film which never lost sight of its human emotional appeal, and a real tribute to Carpenter as one of the cinema's best contemporary storytellers.



#### BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA (1986, 100 minutes)

If storyline was important to STARMAN it seems to have gone out of the window with this film which reunites Carpenter and Keri Russell once more for a furious, non-sensical, but stunningly entertaining, comic strip romp which seems to throw in, not only the kitchen sink, but the entire bathroom plumbing as well.

The "plot" has something to do with truck driver Jack Burton (Russell) and a Chinese side-kick chasing a 2,000-year-old villain (James Hong) who has kidnapped a girl with green eyes to marry (whatever turns you on). Confused? No doubt, but the whole thing is carried over with such unpretentious charm, and whipped along by Carpenter at an incredible rate of knots, that I didn't really care. If nothing else the film demonstrates just how effective Carpenter can be at staging blindingly fast action and special effects and if indeed, the film is an ungodly mess, it is still more palatable and enjoyable than most other director's work. Incidentally the ending is left open for a sequel which I would thoroughly look forward to (if the backlash from the critics doesn't put paid to it).







# PEEPING TOM

cert X

TEXT: JOHN MARTIN

ART: GORDON FINLAYSON



"SADIAN" "Necrophilic" "Perverted" "Destructive" "Nasty" SNUFF? S.S. EXPERIMENT CAMP? - Nope! "A blight on the British cinema" Ruh? You give up? These were contemporary reviews of Michael Powell's PEEPING TOM (1959), and the best is yet to come. Derek Hill of "The Tribune" come on down - "The only really satisfactory way to deal with PEEPING TOM would be to shovel it up and flush it down the nearest sewer. Even then the stench would remain." Thank you Derek and is it any wonder then that Barry Forshaw in "Starburst" refers to PEEPING TOM as the "Original Video Nasty."

All this bile was being heaped upon the head of the man who, with his long-time collaborator, Emeric Pressburger, had given the British film industry a string of classics and international hits including THE LIFE AND DEATH OF COLONEL BLIMP (1943) A CANTERBURY TALE (1944) A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH (1946) THE RED SHOES (1948 starring Moira Shearer who turns up as a victim in PEEPING TOM) GONE TO EARTH (1949) and THE TALES OF HOFFMAN (1951). But in no other field, with the possible exception of professional boxing, does one's reputation rest so entirely on one's last outing, and even this catalogue of former glories could not save him from a savaging at the hands of the critics - indeed, one wise-guy-after-the-event pointed to the glue poured on girl's hair in A CANTERBURY TALE as indicative of a warped mind.

A quick perusal of his C.V. reveals strong elements of the spectacular, the arabesque, the fantastic, and in PEEPING TOM he turned to those primal fantasies we all share and few will own up to, the mental territory that the Normal Normans frantically disown.

Powell and writer Leo Marks had planned a film on Freud (another iconoclast who got into trouble for holding up to general view the less attractive aspects of the human animal) but John Huston best them to it. The film they made instead recalls Freud's case history "The Rat Man" (Pelican Books) in attempting to probe and illuminate a man's madness, rather than just use a loony as part of a thriller plot.

The latter formula was familiar enough - Fritz Lang's M (1931) being a notable example. Indeed, though PEEPING TOM is often referred to as some kind of British answer to PSYCHO (1960) (which is chronologically inaccurate anyway) Hitchcock's film, its other merits notwithstanding is firmly set on those tried and trusted lines.

Making the nut-case the centre of the story, the approach initiated in PEEPING TOM would lead to films such as REPULSION (1965) but in 1959 it was without precedent, Powell had come up with an extraordinary meditation on the relation between love, work and anti-social acts, but the critics were not ready for it.

Powell was being "Perverse," squandering his great talent on subject matter not worthy of it (the same charge was soon to be levelled at Hitchcock over PSYCHO). "I was shocked to the core to find a director of his stature befouling the screen with such perverted nonsense - it wallows in the diseased urges of a homicidal pervert and actually romanticises his pornographic brutality... from its lumbering, mildly salacious beginning, to its appallingly masochistic and depraved climax, it is wholly evil."

The homicidal pervert in question is Mark Lewis (the name a near mirror-image of the name of the film's writer Leo Marks - one of the many in-jokes with which the film is peppered) played by Carl Boehm in the manner of a latterday Peter Lorre. Making his living as a focus puller (film buff silhouettes also litter the film) he tops up his income by taking cheesy pin-up photos in a sleazy studio over a corner shop. Slesze is the key note, enhanced by a lurid use of colour and composition. But this is only scratching the surface - Mark's wanderings through the seedy world of "Glamour" and jack-off fodder allow him to indulge his real life's work.

Mark is, to put it technically, mad as a hatter. His unfortunate state of mind can be traced back to his psychiatrist father's obsessive interference in, and experimentation with, his childhood, all lovingly recorded on home movies. We see Mr. Lewis (played by Powell in the home movies - and it that gives you food for thought, reflect also that Powell's mother was an ace photographer) exposing him to stimuli such as arousal (watching a courting couple) or fear (dropping a lizard on his bed). Most disturbing of all, filming

Mark's farewell to his mother on her deathbed, a scene even more distressing in that it signals the end of the moderating influence she might have had.

Mark is certainly no villain, he is not even an agent. "His death is recorded in his father's films" says Danny Peary "It is only a matter of time before he is buried." Are we to conclude that Mr. Lewis, presiding over Mark's childhood with his infernal psychiatry, is the villain? Blaming the sins of the fathers 'leads us into an infinite regress - just where does the buck stop? Probably one of the things about PEEPING TOM that most distressed the critics was the absence of any easy moral handle for them to grab, just as the hang 'em flog 'em brigade

When he comes to manhood Mark is out to continue and to outshine his father's work, searching for "The most frightening sight in the world" to add to the archives. And what is the world's most frightening sight? In the words of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "Fear itself." Mark stalks girls with his camera, films them and abates them through the throat with one of the legs of his tripod, to which is also attached a mirror so that the victims are treated in their final moments to their own reactions to impending doom. "WARNING" admonished the poster "Don't see PEEPING TOM unless you are prepared to see the screaming shock and raw terror on the faces of those marked for death." Fear feeding on itself, a closed circuit of dread - that's what gets young Mark's rocks off. It has been argued in subsequent appreciations (e.g. Forshaw's) of PEEPING TOM that Mark, sexually and personally repressed since childhood (so far, so good) uses his tripod to sublimate the function he cannot perform by terminating the objects of his desire. But surely Freud, for whom "Sublimation" was the very corner-stone of civilisation, never extended the term to include such behaviour as going around stabbing women in the throat!

There is certainly a parallel with Norman Bates in PSYCHO, who calls Mom to take care of things whenever his quiet life is threatened by sexual arousal. And again like Norman, Mark is offered the chance of salvation in a sexual relationship with Helen (Anna Massey), but can't manage it. In an ironic touch, Helen's blind mother is the only one who can sense Mark's state of mind, as though the sighted characters can't see the wood for the trees.

The all-pervasiveness of Mark's "Scotophilia" (morbid urge to gaze) has been signalled by his carrying a camera under his reporter-style duffel-coat everywhere he goes - in one exchange he remarks that he works for "The Observer" (get it?) and one finds oneself wondering how he got on with C.A. Lejeune, the Observer film critic who went totally beyond the call of duty in waxing indignant over THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1957) and DRACULA (1958). Mark even films the police as they investigate the girls' murders, eventually giving himself away when pens fall out of his pocket - and you can read (or write) into that what you will.

As the police close in on him Mark takes the experiment to its logical extension, skewering himself after declaring his fear and how he is glad he is afraid - a soliloquy of tragic proportions which is simultaneously darkly hilarious. As Mark's life ends the film

in his camera runs out. Powell, who has stated that the reason the theme of artists dying for their art recurs throughout his films is that he would die for his (Jean Cocteau is another director on a death trip who lived on into a ripe old age) says of Mark "I feel very close to the hero, who is an 'Absolute' director, someone who approaches life like a director, who is conscious of life and suffers from it. He is a technician of emotion." Mark has proved himself a dedicated artist, the ultimate auteur - with his brief glimpse of true fear he has completed his father's experiment with an image that even he was unable to capture - in this idea the perverse ached of affirmation that emerges from PEEPING TOM - Mark, at great cost, has finally outshone his father, and his suicide, though realising his father's destruction of him, is also his escape from an intolerable life.

The cocktail of sex and violence has always been a difficult one to get the censor to swallow, and it was perhaps Powell's distinguished track record that enabled him to pull it off. And to be fair, though the gutter press had a field day, the response from the film journals was more reasoned (which is more than can be said for the "Video Nasties" campaign of the early eighties). Iain Johnston wrote in "Motions" - "One might feel a little uneasy over Mark's dark room cum projection room for, filled with all his atrocious documents, doesn't it represent the secret place for all our own secret, dark, perverted thoughts?" Powell himself feels it's "A very tender film, a very nice one. Almost a romantic film." One is reminded of Hitchcock's comments on PSYCHO and there is so much humour, allusion and dark resonance crammed into the subject of Powell's film as there is in Hitchcock's masterpiece. Damn it, none of the deaths are that graphically rendered even by the standards of the day although it has been alleged that, as with Hammer product, harder versions were made for

foreign consumption.

But Philistinism won the day, as per usual, and despite last ditch cuts Powell was run out of town, unbankable, his illustrious career washed up. He reckons today that if the producers had "Had the courage of a louse" they would have recruited the angry reviews to their ad campaign (a ploy that was to work wonders for THE LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT in 1972). What happened was "It vanished for 20 years and I vanished with it - I'd grown up, audiences had grown up, films had stayed in the nursery."

The British film industry's loss of perhaps its greatest asset was later to be the gain of the American generation of "Brat" directors, who identified with Powell's maverick spirit as much as they admired his mastery of technique. Powell became a consultant to the likes of Scorsese, whose MEAN STREETS (1975) attests to the massive influence of Powell's films generally, and PEEPING TOM specifically, on his work.

And Scorsese's recent revival of PEEPING TOM made nonsense of the criticisms that its subject matter was unworthy of consideration - the film still packs a punch. Jay Cocks puts it thus - "It's a movie made, in a way, in opposition to an audience. It is, in the best and oldest sense, an underground film." Indeed, the cinematic jokes, such as the double voyeurism of watching a man watch his own suicide, recalls the best joke of the lot, the impudent eye-slitting of UN CHIEN ANDALOU (1928) with which Bunuel announced himself to the world. And like UN CHIEN "It is heartening to know that PEEPING TOM will proudly, never be respectable. It is perhaps the only film that will not let the audience off the hook... no wonder it will be perpetually non-nerving. It is the only movie that watches you." That's all very well, but what's bothering me is - did he capture his crowning moment before the film ran out? I'm tempted to believe he dipped out, as usual.



"Something thumps you on the back - looking down, you see the bloody head of a harpoon protruding through your stomach. Your hands clutch at the gaping wound as you try to stop your entrails spilling into the slime of the sewer." This sort of thing happens every day in the SAMHAIN office but we just take it in our stride and don't make a great fuss about it. No point crying over spilt blood as it were.

However something called The Evangelical Alliance weren't quite so enamoured with the fantasy gaming books from whence passages like the one cited above, came.

The Alliance is moaning that the book TALISMAN OF DEATH contains "A devil chant" (gasp!) and "Sexual acts between homosexuals" (gag!) Not "Homosexual acts" or "Sexual acts between men," you'll notice but that horror of horrors, "Sexual acts between homosexuals."

Another book, THE HOUSE OF HELL, features a guy being decapitated and a black mass at which a nubile girl is stretched naked on an altar (Where can I get a copy - Ed.) Puffin Books, those notorious pornsters, contend that "The books...are immensely popular and (firmly fantasy-based)." The Evangelical Alliance says "Books like these clearly portray a dangerous and evil world of the imagination." Well, quite - surely censoring people's imaginations smacks somewhat of Orwell's 1984, n'est-ce pas? If the Evangelical thought police want to find an occult organisation who ply children with images of half-naked men being whipped, tortured and nailed to trees, they shouldn't have to look too far. Still, for their concerted efforts to safeguard our moral welfare we are pleased to award them the coveted SAMHAIN GOLDEN BOG ROLL AWARD with which to clean up their act.

The award is given to any individual, group, film, book or what-have-you whose activities ought to be brought to the attention of SAMHAIN readers. Nominations should be sent to: GOLDEN BOG ROLL, SAMHAIN, 19, Elm Grove Road, Topsham, Exeter, Devon EX3 0EQ.

## COLLECTOR'S CORNER

FILM fans, and perhaps especially horror/science fiction/fantasy film fans, are well known for being addictive collectors of anything and everything to do with their favourite movies. I'm no exception to the rule with a large collection of magazines, posters, stills and films on video tape but as with every collector I'm always on the look out for that elusive item that perhaps completes a run of one particular magazine title or would just look good in the collection, and I know I'm not alone in this. So this issue we begin a regular COLLECTOR'S CORNER in which readers can seek out items, free of charge, through the pages of SAMHAIN. All you have to do is write to us telling us what it is you are particularly looking for (it must be a genre related item(s) i.e. no 1979 Ford Gortinas) and we'll publish the letters and with any luck someone may be able to help you out with your search. However this isn't a service for people selling something, it's strictly for those who want a particular item and to set the ball rolling I received a letter recently from a guy called David Williamson who lives in Lancashire and is desperate to get hold of the Aurora glow in the dark model kit of King Kong. You remember those kits, I used to have a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and there were others like the Frankenstein monster and Dracula available. Well David's got all of those but he does want the King Kong model and in fact he would be happy to hear from anyone who has any of the glow in the dark kits, preferably still boxed and unassembled. If you can help him he can be contacted at 137, Rochdale Road East, Heywood, Lancashire, OL10 1QU.

And as it's the first column we at SAMHAIN thought we'd also plug our own wants, the printable ones at least, so if anyone out there has any of the following they'd be willing to part with we'd be only too happy to hear from you. The address is on page three and I'm sure we could see our way clear to a few lifetime subscriptions to SAMHAIN!

STARLOG issue 7, FANTASTIC FILMS issues 3 and 32, MONSTER MAG issue 2, any early issues of CINEFANTASTIQUE, any copies of CASTLE OF FRANKENSTEIN, a video of FOUR FLIES ON GREY VELVET, a poster for PRISONER OF THE CANNIBAL GOD, a poster for BLOODBATH OF DR. Jekyll, any rare Italian-related items.

You see our needs are quite simple!

## FANZINES

PIECES OF MARY, Issue No. 1 (16 pages) 25p.

Published by Gareth James, 51, Gorstey Lea, Burntwood, Walsall, West Midlands, WS7 9DH.

The first issue includes interviews with James Herbert and Ramsey Campbell, as well as reviews of RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD, FRIGT NIGHT AND CAT'S EYE, and an interesting look at the horrors of Glamis Castle.

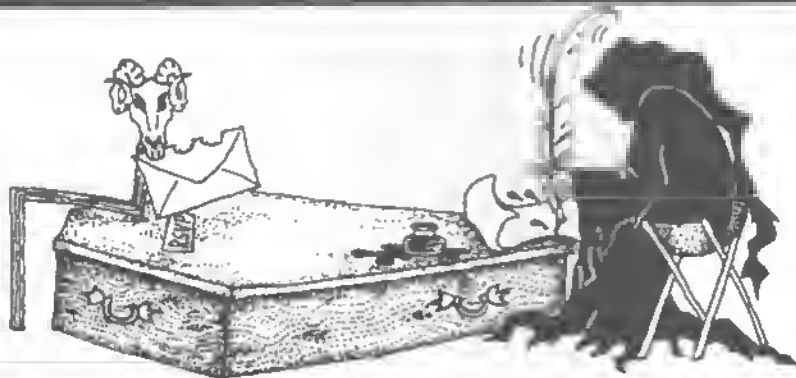
YEEBOUCH! Issue 1. (6 pages) 35p (includes 15p postage)

Published by Nigel Bartlett, 30, Vicar Street, Wednesbury, West Midlands, WS10 9HF.

As Nigel puts it: "Almed at the rare breed of people(?) who regularly feed on a diet of torture, dismemberment and zombie/cannibal gut crunching!" By now issue two should be out (with an extra two pages) while issue one is a Cannibal special with reviews of CANNIBAL APOCALYPSE, CANNIBAL FEROX, CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST and CANNIBAL TERROR.

# SOMETHING TO SCREAM ABOUT

WRITE TO: JON GALLAGHER, SAMHAIN, 19 EDN GROVE ROAD, TOPSHAM,  
EXETER, DEVON EX3 0EQ.



Dear John

Many thanks for the copy of SAMHAIN a nice unusual title for a horror mag! I must say that I didn't quite know what to expect as I have had so many of these mags sent to me over the years, and being involved in Gothique magazine I know the problems involved.

I must say that I was pleasantly surprised and for a first issue you have done a splendid job and the reason for this I feel is that it's up to date and doesn't rely on the usual "Films of Kantoff", "Peter Cushing story" etc. Things that we have all seen before. If you can be topical, with a touch of the old fantasy films you are on to a winner.

You did ask for comments so here goes: The general layout could be a lot tighter, it does seem to wander a bit, with a little too much going on some of the pages. The cartoon character is especially good and it does add a little lighthearted humour throughout.

I feel that you could have well done without the comic strip EVIL DEAD. This is OK in a comic and I feel that the general standard of the artwork lets down the rest of the mag. Perhaps I'm being too critical as I'm an artist myself by trade! The inclusion of TV films is a splendid idea and if you can get some advanced information of forthcoming movies on TV this will be great.

All in all a promising debut and it deserves a wider circulation. Robin James (Secretary of the Gothique Film Society)  
75, Burns Avenue,  
Feltham,  
Middlesex.

Londoners are probably well aware of the Gothique Film Society who this year celebrate their 21st anniversary. Their current season is nearly over with one show left on March 20 (THE RED HOUSE starring Edward G. Robinson and REVENGE OF THE ZOMBIES starring good old John Carradine). However if you want to get in touch with them about membership details I'm sure Robin will be only too happy to oblige.

Unfortunately Robin, the TV companies were unable to give us any advance information on forthcoming movies on TV so that nice idea fell through.



DAY OF THE DEAD'S "Bub" courtesy of the pen of Jon Gallis.

Dear Samhain

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on issue number one. What a debut! I really cannot praise you enough; there is a definite lack of material in Britain concerning the horror cinema, Starburst and Fangoria my only comforts. However SAMHAIN will now be added to those two, it is informative, interesting, up-to-date, witty and contains excellent photos. You stated that you would be interested in hearing suggestions for SAMHAIN; the lack of colour photos is a very minor regret but the sheer enthusiasm of everyone concerned with the magazine amply makes up for this.

One suggestion though: every month I update my personal top ten horror movies of all time. Perhaps a regular top ten sent in by other readers would be an idea, I for one would be very interested in comparing lists.

Finally I wonder if you could let me know if you plan to start a subscription service as I would place a regular order.

Once again I'd like to thank you for a tremendous magazine. Keep up the great work.

Yours horrifically  
Leatherface (aka David Gracie)  
11, Mountpleasant Road,  
Rothsay,  
Isle of Bute,  
Scotland PA20 9HQ.

Top tens anyone? Send them in and we'll see if we can compile some sort of SAMHAIN readers all time greats. Re the subscriptions David, as soon as we can get on a steady footing regards distribution, advertising etc we'll start subs but in the meantime I'd be grateful to hear from anyone who would consider taking one out.

Dear John

Thanks for the prompt delivery of the first issue of SAMHAIN which I sent for. Lots I could say about it, but seems rather irrelevant considering that issue 2 must be out by now, I'll save my comments for it.

Good to see a mag (especially a British mag) with some distinctive qualities - intelligent comment, wry humour, ambitious if off-beat production values and a refreshing stance on gore whereby you neither take a prudish, moralistic tone on a Fangoria-type "Gore is all that matters" attitude.

Yours Sincerely  
Gordon Rennie,  
73, Kirsyde Avenue,  
Kirkintilloch,  
Glasgow  
G66 3DR.

Dear John

Prior to going to see DAY OF THE DEAD in Exeter I went into the Read and Return Bookshop and saw in front place in the window what looked like just another of those tedious "fun" magazines that largely consist of a couple of out-of-focus pictures and pages of amateur stories of which I'm no great fan. With a sad heart I gave it a closer inspection.

Flicking through it my pleasure grew as I saw clear pictures and interesting articles plus first-rate artwork. I quickly handed over the hard-earned and toddled off up the High Street.

Having been a follower of the horror/science fiction genres since I was knee-high to an Ewok, I must say I was very impressed.

I tend to find that everybody at work thinks that I only come out every full moon because if I'm not reading some horrific literature, I'm spouting on about the latest grisly cinematic offering.

Which is really a long way of saying how I chose to almost retreat from a lot of social events in order to watch a good horror film.

Now don't get the impression that I'm not like anyone else, just like the average psychopath (cue insane cackle).

Seriously, it really is nice to know that there are some other people with the same interest as mine in the region as until now I thought I was the only one to have escaped the net!

I wish you all the best and look forward to meeting you and some of the other contributors very soon as I tend to visit Exeter about every other week.

May your gun always have at least one Silver Bullet left.

John Hadlow  
8, Southern Road,  
Exmouth,  
Devon  
EX8 5SA



Christopher Lee's Dracula as drawn by reader Ian Taylor from Basing.

Dear John

I've just ploughed through the first issue of *SAMPUR*. All I can say is I'm glad to see that there is intelligent life in Devon! In fact many other places. I was glad to see that *SAMPUR* did actually have something to read in it and was good value for money.

Both the David Crossingham and Barnadapole articles were good but personally I'd like to see more of the "Joan" genre included. Like Ruthy Belmont in *THESE DAYS* I find all this talking up of young women by young men a bit boring!

Like you I'm more at home with the horror stories than at first you get a strong, good feeling and attention to detail. It's often like to see some underlines in some text and Roman. I've just seen *DAY OF THE DEAD* which I thought was excellent though not the best in the series. The effects were really good but in my opinion the characterisation was stronger than that with the contrast between the civilian survivors and the walking ones. After seeing the lower, more characterful of the movies, the film seemed to say the message "and who are the real monsters?" The two women characters in the village? The film also contained some striking images I thought such as the man-port of the beginning showing men with the headlines reading "unofficially 1" "The Dead Men".

I was glad to see you reviewing the excellent *Joan Rivers* book as I have one. Readers might be interested to know of another book which I've found useful entitled *THEATRE IN THE 1960s* by Peter Richards published by Methuen Publications. It features all types of London films as well as in part the horror genre but also a detailed bibliography and articles and information on the films of Hammer, Hammer, Cohen, Argento and Polter. Anything from as far back as 1931/1932 up to 1960/1961 and the film, a good read.

Yours  
Andrew Abbott  
A. St. Paul's College  
Bury, Lancashire  
Devon  
T01 928.

Barnes and Bess for will both eventually be covered by our regular series on the works of a particular director. Issue one saw Crossingham and this time round it's a particular favourite of mine, John Carpenter.

Dear Jonathan

I would like to compliment you on a good magazine. The film reviews are brilliant and I'm sure as you very well know, as you probably know there is always a "bad" and kind as that there is not enough colour, why?

I like *Sam* and *Sam* as a good magazine. I would like to see a review of something in a future issue. I hope this letter is printed and my name is printed.

Thanks a lot Mr. Gollub. Lots of love  
Kevin Fisher (aged 11)  
P. Jersey Coast,  
New Jersey,  
USA  
07033 928.

Very thanks for your kind letter Kevin and your enclosed drawing of a werewolf. In future issues I can assure you we will get down to some serious coverage of werewolf movies old and new. In the meantime I hope this *Sam* cartoon will keep you happy.

Regards the colour, it's a staple sector of cost. I can't afford

Dear Jonathan

Thank you for your great magazine which I'm sure will go from strength to strength. Here are some comments I dropped. I totally disagree with your review of *ALIEN*. The film was as having a long slow build up that makes it suspenseful and makes the tension almost unbearable even though you know all that would soon be over.

And as for *Leslie* "I said in your story" Rattall, thank you for he's relaxing as I heard on the channel 4 news the other night. This was a parody of the first order as far as getting women horror films about even late night on Channel 4, news and nothing else in full ordinary time slots on the ITV network. Even the BBC as now cutting across from films broadcast on film, years before. With friends like these who needs the television? Churchill, right?

Are you going to review *Robert* "Incorruptible" by Henry Campbell and "The Summer of Sam" by Chris Hooten are both highly commendable and excellent. Both would make great films.

Finally, has anyone seen the video for the latest single by Kate Bush *CLASHING* I've seen it on the Tube and was very impressed. Kate as the monster of sound was really frightening. Another single of hers was called *NOTHING* as she must be a horror film fan at heart. Now about nothing has for her favourite 12 horror films?

At the best  
C. Young  
40, Parkfield Avenue,  
Leighton,  
Barnet, Herts.  
AL5 2AB.

As you can see from this issue we've covered Kate's video, albeit briefly and are endeavouring to get more out of interview as stay tuned. What do other readers feel about the coverage of horror novels. At present our Book and Bedtime section is devoted to horror film books but would you rather we included novels as well? Let us know.

Dear John

Many thanks for the free copy of *SAMPUR* No. 1. It is a great at me. I'm sure it's copy but it won't miss it. You ask for comments on your first issue, so here goes.

Overall impression: Very favourable. I enjoyed all the articles and the reviews (even to see comedy any something nice about *THEY* *THE* for a change) and thought the written contents were nicely balanced.

Except for *Sam* and *Sam* because I disliked the artwork (except for *Sam* and *Sam* which was really excellent and really well done) I didn't like the *Sam* and *Sam* stuff and really don't like the *CRUISE* *GLAS* strip was a dreadful mistake. It just isn't very good and takes up far too much space - few more pages of text would have been far more welcome.

Finally (love, love, love), the layout was really lovely but it would be more welcome one kind of following and following to (again I must praise *Sam* and *Sam* - really - and the effort they will give the magazine it's not identical and a distinct comic style).

I'm sure that *SAMPUR* will improve rapidly. I certainly liked it and I don't think able to miss *Sam* a copy I might have sent for a copy. From now I'll look out for No. 2.

Enid J. Baines  
18, Manor Road,  
Westcliff-on-Sea,  
Essex SS5 7SA

We need to Evans as all published letters receive a free copy. Anyway, thanks for your forthright comments (we're happy to take criticism as long as it's constructive) but one thing I must say in defence of Gordon Fitzgibbon's artwork is that it came off the wire from the printing process, a lot of the time that was lost but hopefully that will have been rectified this time round.



# THE EVIL DEAD

CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE...

BOUGHT TO LIFE...  
KARCHTA STORN  
INSARTRA...

IT HAS BEEN A NUMBER  
OF YEARS SINCE I BEGAN  
EXCAVATING THE RUIN  
OF KUN DAR.

NOW I HAVE RE-  
TREATED TO A SMALL  
CABIN WHERE I CONTIN-  
UED MY WORK. THE  
BOOK I FOUND DEALS  
WITH DEMONS. IT IS  
THROUGH THIS BOOK  
THAT THEY CAN BE ...



LATER...



BUT, AS THEY REACH  
THE BRIDGE...



THEY MAKE THEIR WAY  
BACK TO THE CABIN



WHERE CHERYL MAKES  
A STARTLING CHANGE

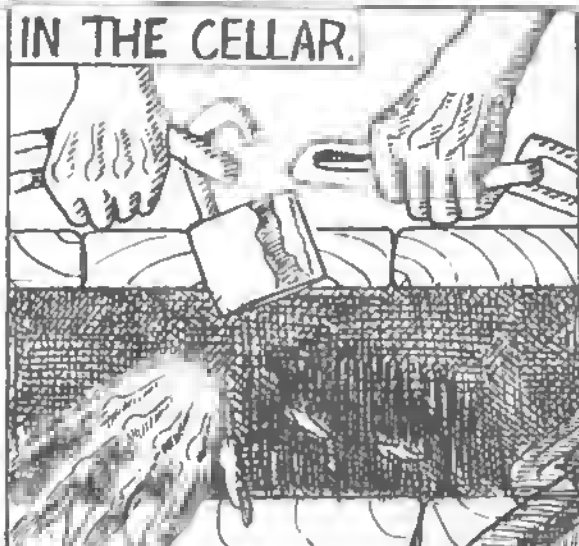




SHE IS EVENTUALLY SUBDUED & IMPRISONED...



IN THE CELLAR.



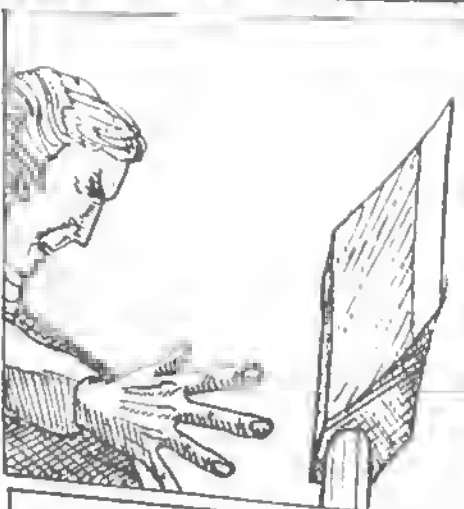
WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!



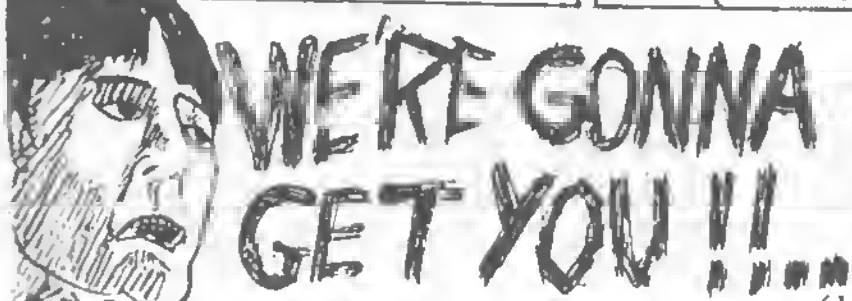
BUT THE BRIDGE ...



SHELLY!



SCOT LEAVES.





WEREWOLVES have come a long way since Lon Chaney Junior first cottoned onto the idea that it would take a lot more than a pack of Wilkinson Sword to clear his five 'O' clock shadow.

In recent years lycanthropy has meant big business and the days of Oliver Reed holding his hands atill while Roy Ashton slapped on successive layers of yak hair are long gone.

Films like AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON and COMPANY OF WOLVES have taken the werewolf to new heights of realism as well as increasing the popularity of this member of the "Old school" of Hollywood monsters.

The latest addition to the long line of werewolf movies will be seen next year on the small screen, BBC's BRIGHT WOLF, written and directed by Mike Crisp and starring Sara Coward who, as well as appearing in the West End alongside the likes of Derek Jacobi and Timothy West is also one of the regulars in BBC radio's answer to "Eastenders," "The Archers."

Her role as Caroline Bone in the latter is a far cry from the part she plays in BRIGHT WOLF which has a suitably gothic Victorian setting. Sara was kind enough to give us the low down on the production which she described as "The most enormous fun to make."

She plays the heroine of the piece (Emily) who is visiting her uncle and cousin at their big country house, the cousin being a sickly looking but otherwise terrifically presentable boy called Christian who is supposedly suffering a "Melancholy" as a result of his mother's death, years before.

Emily arrives to be greeted by a sinister butler who, under the guise of correctness, in fact rules the household. For the truth is that poor old Christian's "Melancholy," characterised by an inability to endure strong sunlight (shades of vampirism) and a thirst for human blood, is no more or less than the onset of adolescent werewolfdom. Apparently they're normal until about 12 then the hair begins to grow, the teeth become long and yellow and as we all know "Even a man who..."

Christian's father (Emily's Uncle) Sir George d'Aubigny (George Baker) hopes upon hope that his son and Emily will make a match and being a fully formed werewolf himself (in select moments of course) he is quite aware of the family problem but is obsessed by the necessity to carry on the ancient line.

It transpires that Christian's mother (not of the werewolf variety) discovered the horrid truth about her husband only when Christian and his twin brother Gideon were little tots. And not until they were 14 and unfortunately displaying werewolf traits of the worst kind, did she crack poisoning Gideon and trying to kill Christian too which seems fairly reasonable given the circumstances. However Sir George didn't think so (spoilsport) and had her whisked off to the local loony bin where in the best horror film tradition she can be seen wandering from time to time.

However things really start to move when, on the day of Emily's arrival, mummy escapes from the nut house and heads for home. The plot thickens a great deal with the injection of ancient country

churches, blood drained corpses, curses dating from the 14th century and a dashing cavalry officer who tries - almost successfully - to get Emily away from it all. But family curiosity is too strong and she returns to the house determined to discover exactly how many bones the family skeleton has!

"Stylistically, the film is an absolutely classic forties-type piece" said Sara "There are no 1980's psychological tricks, just all the special effects you'd hope to find in a standard Hammer-type movie. From what I've seen it will look very good indeed and it's acted for real within the terms of the idiom. So we have a classically hammy situation taken very seriously and given whatever reality is possible."

"I'd never seen special effects from backstage before. They included setting fire to the gothic hall and staircase of the house (at Ealing Studios - the fire officers all stood by in small, tight-lipped groups) and filming in an absolutely genuine 16th century, very high, very narrow and very crumbly church tower and belfry. Some potentially nasty moments with Victorian boots and huge skirt!"

Although BRIGHT WOLF probably won't reach the TV screen until next year the director does intend entering it for short film festivals (it's running time should end up at between 30 and 40 minutes).

Sara admits to loving horror films/TV "But I do have an iron constitution" she added. "I think they're ideally very high class rubbish - a bit like a particularly good pudding - addictive and highly enjoyable, but basically long-term unsatisfying and if you have nothing but, you get fat, pale and spotty." Well that would explain my complexion but at nine stone I'd have to disagree with her.

Sara went on to suggest a horror soap opera, not like THE MURSTERS but something for adults with characters that go on through a whole series of situations. Now that's a thought. And then she suggested something that would really give the public something to get their fangs into: "The Werewolf of Ambridge, Bats at the Bull, Dan rises from the Dead!" The possibilities are endless. Could this mean the end of soap operas as we know them. I hope so but in the meantime we can look forward to BRIGHT WOLF, may it shine brightly.



SARA COWARD, STAR OF BRIGHT WOLF.

## "MUSIC MADE TO THRILL..." Experiment IV

WITH her 1978 track HAMMER HORROR on the LIONHEART LP, Kate Bush won the hearts of many horror film fans and now she's done it again with her remarkable video for her last single EXPERIMENT IV.

Unfortunately the single didn't fare too well in the charts and to my knowledge the video only received one television showing, on "The Tube," but if you managed to catch it you would have seen what amounted to a first-rate mini horror movie. Move over Michael Jackson, this is what they want.

Directed by Ms Bush, which would explain the disappointingly brief appearances she herself makes in the video, it also featured the likes of Peter (TIME BANDITS) Vaughan and alternative comedians Dawn French and Stephen Fry (don't worry it's not a comedy and they

all get bumped off). However the real star was the "Sound Creature" created when a military experiment to develop "A sound that could kill someone from a distance" (shades of THE SHOUT) goes terribly wrong, unleashing an industrial light and Magic-type monster, you know the sort: huge dripping fangs, red eyes, flapping bat-like wings.

The monster runs amok in the secret military base, killing all the lab technicians and the military man behind the experiment (Vaughan) and then sets off into the wide world in the delectable guise of Ms. Bush, proffering a knowing wink before driving away into what really should be a sequel but what am I saying for god's sake, it's only a video. Keep telling yourself that, it's only a video...it's only a video!



BEAUTY



AND THE MONSTER



ETHER AS G...



SAMHAIN'S JOHN MARTIN INTERVIEWS THE "GURU" OF HORROR FICTION... RAMSEY CAMPBELL.

"LIVERPOOL IS THE POOL OF LIFE" C.S. Jung.

RAMSEY Campbell often switches from English over the Atlantic, coming from the south-west high, blue building town, near the river from Teutonic and Celtic folk - respectively, adding to his first two novels THE DEAD AND THE ALIVE POWER and THE FACE THAT WAS NOT. It was with such tales of ancient decay and power that Campbell established himself, with the emphasis, as the dean of British horror writers. He's also a journalist, a broadcaster, President of the British Fantasy Society, an the secretary and of young bookworms from the likes of Stephen King and Peter Straub... and to continue the literary world he has almost would take more space than we have here (so go read his fly-leaf).

Yet Campbell has not established the kind of mass readership that King enjoys, and more than to the general British public than writers outside like Guy K. Smith and Simon Raine. No longer show for this age: rather, he lives in the periphery of the general consciousness due to the Editor of the New York Times, J.P. Lovecraft... and seeing him for the first time, he's almost an outcast. But it soon becomes apparent that the intimidating front is a window, it opens to his sense of humor (of which more later) - although he pronounced as "A tough old man" I found him most thoughtful and helpful... a good bloke. Ramsey was keen to demonstrate his compact disc player "This stuff doesn't mess about" he found as Paula drove around the house - and the same could most definitely be said about his work.

What does it feel like to be this "Elder statesman" figure, a "Guru" as you were recently described in 77?

Pretty responsibly, I'd say.

I detect signs of some belated recognition coming your way these days.

Well... yes, is a strange sense I've gone from being unknown to being accepted as a kind of grey eminence of the field, without ever going through the usual process of being widely known in the States. The BBC, when they want to ask questions about horror fiction, now tend to ring me up, so I'm somewhere in the shadow of establishment, I suppose. I've no idea how that process came about, but thank it is.

It's pretty good going to be on "Elder statesman" at the age of 40.

Yes, although I suppose many of us tend to start young. I wrote my first published story when I was 15 but that's not that unusual. The same goes for August Derleth and Robert Bloch... I suppose it's the creative flame which burns fast and takes so high. And me again when I'm 80 years old, if I'm still capable of forcing as articulate statement by the way.

You write such a prodigious, shall we say...

But compared with Naust.

Oh, but you were writing children as well as fiction from a very early age.

Yeah, well, 17 or 18 or something like that, I could have been writing... you're very kind to call it criticism, I was writing commentaries in the form of a journal. I became probably best known for lambasting KING BOMB - the original, which didn't deserve it, rather than the remake which I suspect probably did. I think it was because I'd gone down to London with Barry Baskler who then edited ALBION and ALISTAR MORRIS: It had been a long day, we got to the NYT and I had been hearing about this film for years - we got to the film they built up to that extent, you finally see it for the first time and it's something of a disappointment, partly because it's not quite what you expected to see. I never expected the excitement to be quite so jerky. It took as a couple more viewings to appreciate how much more there was to it. As you know it's now on my top ten horror movie list, it's the only monster movie that I would accept as being a genuine horror film, one that sets out to be truly frightening. So you can take what I was writing then with a certain amount of the critical perspective. I did produce an essay letter from Ray Harryhausen in the magazine - we made up letter on, however.

It's often the case that people don't see movies that go on to be critical as their own night, you seem to have been doing both from the start.

Well, I'd already sold at least one book before I started writing for the freedom to my agent. I was writing as much as time partly to cover the essential emptiness beneath, y'know? One tends to say most when one knows least. I think the described tended to encourage that to a certain extent. I became a kind of available controversy - I actually had one fanzine, it was BLAZON, an English fanzine, where the editor said to me, basically, "What controversy will you be coming up with for our first issue?"... in fact it was even more explicit than that, he wanted to see to read the early stories of John W. Campbell, who later edited ASTOUNDING, and your scores on them. But even in those days, I wasn't quite that available.

They wanted you to do a Paula Hamilton job.

Oh, we're getting to Paula Armstrong, are we? That's a different kettle of fish entirely. Let's assume that the readers of SAMHAIN know what we're talking about... This is your colleague...

That is John Baskler and Paula Armstrong...

...and John Baskler, talking to Paula Armstrong, who seems to be one of the insouciant, chat show hosts around these days (or hostesses in this case), who introduced the subject of horror fiction in a way of voice roughly akin to pinching something up between finger and thumb and dropping it as far away from her as possible, and kept insisting that we were people who were being a bit too polite to her, I saw they might have pointed out that given that people like Jim Richard and Stephen King are consistently best-sellers, it must be rather more than a few people reading what they're writing. I actually find this curious, I think it's the last ditch in a way of trying to present horror as something which is written by peculiar people and is only read by them too, and is presumably nothing to do with us. It's the weirdest principle, isn't it, the idea that if you do away with this nasty thing, then the evils of society, which it seems to be reflecting rather than creating, would somehow go away. The oddest part of the Paula Armstrong interview was that she tried to make the point that it was ill-fated for you to write about human violence, so her argument would appear to be that if something is human then you're not even allowed to talk about it. Maybe she thinks she's in South Africa or maybe that's where she would like to be.

What about VICEGORGON? I know that's a film you admire a lot.

Oh very much, yes.

You were looking before about a film getting such a back to what you're disappointed when you eventually get to see it. VICEGORGON fits in, I think a lot of other films these days, back to King to name one here from the States, that is the one you might say with it you'd already seen a plethora of slow-blow descriptions of the same effect, which somewhat lessened the impact.

In the case of VICEGORGON I think that the film is an excellent that even if you have read up on them you still don't quite believe what you are seeing. And I suppose John Carpenter's THE THING, in a different way, is pretty awesome. I think that in the case of THE THING the case can be made for the notion that the film was impressive than anything else that's going on in the film - in VICEGORGON the strength is that the extraordinary, strongly-framed narrative is as interesting, as challenging as the remarkable visual effects. I see me it again and again and I still find it remarkably challenging, disturbing, stimulating, moving... but I have to be one up that the first time I saw it was just after I'd delivered the manuscript of INCUBATED and there were at least certain strategies that I found oddly similar. I actually sat there at the green - the end of the film in a more or less empty cinema and felt as though I was drinking up on look into the screen in a peculiar sort of way, certainly to the extent that I was sitting there thinking "My god, I would have done it that way too." It often happens, but it was a very strange experience, since the film was specifically about the understanding of one's perceptions - it was deeply disturbing... a splendid film.

What made me doing up VICEGORGON was the fact that some of its

arguments seem to run counter to what we've defined as the critical issue - that the horror is inside and we've got to stop it getting out. It seems to me that there was something of a "Vain Glory" - looking mindfully at those that I was convinced of.

As VIDEOGRAPHY well yes, in a sense, but at what point in the story do you think that begins? Because very early on we realize that Debbie Harry and James Woods are already in "videodrome" when- ever that might be, the first time they go to bed together, which is very early in the film - which underlines poor sense of every- thing that goes afterwards, but also pretty much of everything that went before. Because you don't know what point that begins at, it's impossible to know how much of what we are seeing is Max Rame's partial vision of reality and how much has been affected by anything outside. So, as I feel it was a contribution to the debate rather than a partial condemnation. I would have thought David Cronen- burg would be the first to take responsibility for what he was show- ing, rather than rejecting it.

Certainly that would run counter to a lot of what he's said and done in the past... and get there's a lot of what we found in the film where people are looking at how much you can actually see his hand- ing on his perspective on what's going on.

Yes, I see what you mean, he has now agreed to surrounding re- ality in some way - though when he walks out of the building after having blown this guy away, there's this lady who's calling her child to her and doesn't seem at all concerned that apparently a man's just been blown up before her very eyes. Again, I think that's one of the powers of the film, that it does under- mine any explanation that you want to be able to hear on it, which doesn't to say it's not a coherent film, but it won't let you be comfortable with any of its narrative strategies and say "This is real, this is correct." To that extent I would say that you can't really argue that it's coming from outside him, Cronenberg generally being concerned with things existing first within, I mean THEY CAN'T BE WITHIN in the episode of a Cronenberg thing, I would have thought.

Unsettled.

Look, you'd have to convince me that VIDEOGRAPHY is about the same... I don't, we can even call it a service... about an exter- nal force, I'm not sure.

I'm not sure, I think it's a film that we could all do with seeing a few more times.

Oh I'd happily see it again, yeah.

Obviously not as a complete cinema of us as we were allowed to know.

Tell us about your own film work.

I can see this as really quickly, VIDEOGRAPHY was optioned by some guy called Catalina Productions in Hollywood, they paid some money then the option lapsed. I once did an adaptation of Robert E. Howard's "Solomon Kane" for Milton Subotsky.

Yeah, I was wondering what had happened to that.

Well that again lapsed, partly because he was stuck with the bills for the THUNDER series he made, he never completed it but whichever company it was pulled out and left him considerably in debt for all the special effects, for which reason he went cold on sword and sorcery. Anyway "Solomon Kane" never got beyond the story treatment. Milton felt that he'd given as the wrong stories anyway, we should have had stronger stuff than we were using.

I totally understand your view.

Yeah, other than that, I don't know. He himself's doing this TV series now. We talked about the possibility of us doing a script for that, once he decides it not to include stories by other people as well. That would be fun to do.

It seems to me that there's been this natural progression in your work you entered the form of the short story, went on to novels, then on to even larger novels. Then you're delving in film making. I wonder if you have any solutions to direct your own stuff?

Well, you know, I've no solution in that direction. I've got so many novels and short stories to write, who knows when I'll find the time.

OK, tell us about one of the new stuff and the projects you're developing.

THE RICHY MOON is just out... that goes on from DISCREET in terms of the theme. One of the things that I wanted to say was about the new fundamentalism and this drive as many people seem to have - to have the urge to question them away from them, to be told what to think - I really find that pretty disconcerting. In the second half of THE RICHY MOON we get on to the very large and elaborate visual imagery and I must admit I liked doing that. It was the most concerted attempt since THE PARASITE to do that. VIDEOGRAPHY, which I've just finished the first draft of, so I don't want to hazard a guess at it yet, all I can say is that

it started off as a kind of domestic ghost story. In the feel of it a bit like VIDEOGRAPHY but that was something that got much stronger as it went on so I can't say what I've got there. Anyway it's pretty strange.

You've told us about THE RICHY MOON and THE INFLUENCE. Is there anything else for us to look forward to?

SCARED STUFF came out in America, well it's not officially out yet I suppose. This is still... well we decided on the subtitle "Tales of Sea and Desert" - exotic is probably not quite the right word except for one or two minor instances. It's the stuff I wrote mostly in the late seventies... if I'm told you can't do anything in this field I tend to go out and try to do it. This is a pretty much what I did with VIDEOGRAPHY, there was this feeling about that you had to be more graphic, more explicit, so I deliberately went to the opposite direction. As far as SCARED STUFF is concerned, there was this notion that since horror fiction is often about sexuality implicitly, that if you make that explicit, the fiction will cease to have power, the power will be taken away by seeing clear what you were talking about in the first place. I didn't actually believe that, so I wrote a group of stories where the sex was, oh, fairly explicit but where it is the theme rather than an aspect of the story. The stories are all on several themes I can say now... well, we must wait and see. As I say it was only published in a very limited edition for the British Fantasy Convention - and a larger... but still limited edition with some pretty remarkable illustrations by J.R. Pether will be out in the new year (1987). There's also a collection called NIGHT VISIONS, 30,000 words of unpublished material by Clive Barker, Brian Swartz and so, 30,000 words each. Oliver's in MELANESIA, the story on which he's based his new film. Mine are eight stories of varying degrees of strange- ness and grotesque...

Good.

That's out in the States now, they'll be doing it in Britain in time for the Brighton World Science Fiction Convention.

We'll be looking forward to all of these - are there any other "Isaac Campbell" or should know about?

Oh no, I try not to make them secret, I've "Come out" now. It was simply for practical reasons that Clive came out under a pseudonym. I didn't want to fail wrong - the more people who know who really wrote NIGHT OF THE CLAW the better. The other thing I have done recently is a book that will be out in the new year (1987) in the States, an anthology called STORIES THAT DESTROYED ME which I have wanted to do for many years and at last they have let me do it.



THE "ELDER STATESMAN" MICHAEL, MICHAEL CRICHTON.

That'll be very interesting.

My ambition for that is that at least 50% of the material will be unfamiliar to any given reader, I know, maybe a different 50% to each person - there's going to be some stuff in there that you won't know and you'll be pretty disturbed by.

THE FACT THAT YOU DIDN'T have any supernatural element at all whereas the others all have varying degrees of the supernatural. Would you do that sort of supernatural story again?

My ambition for that is that at least 50% of the material will be unfamiliar to any given reader, I know, maybe a different 50% to each person - there's going to be some stuff in there that you won't know and you'll be pretty disturbed by.

THE FACT THAT YOU DIDN'T have any supernatural element at all whereas the others all have varying degrees of the supernatural. Would you do that sort of supernatural story again?

Oh, I actually have got one somewhere in there - there's all these shadowy books in my consciousness that are going to get written eventually, and one that almost certainly will get done will be another psychological horror novel about a serial murderer, possibly more sympathetic than poor old Herriage - who is so pathetic that perhaps he is sympathetic in a way.

No sounds like his name.



Right. There will be another one... not too far away.  
The one I'd like to read is the amazing novel mentioned  
about the space down who finds out something terrible about his  
relatives and has to teach them his offspring.

Who knows, who knows.  
That's a quite a novel-kind - no wonder you've got no time for  
anything serious.

Then again, if Chive can do it... if he can find the time maybe  
I can. Might sort out the odd bit of my brain that I haven't used  
yet, so will

# POLICE 55

PAMELA Armstrong claims we are breaking the  
law by writing about these films but in our  
continued effort to bring you, the reader,  
what you want, we'll risk a night in the  
nick to tell you about two more of the  
videos on Scotland Yard's hit list. This  
time round its AXE and BLOODY MOON. Let the  
law-breaking begin!

AXE s.b.s. CALIFORNIA AXE MASSACRE s.b.s. 125A  
1977 88 (55) minutes Video Network

THE skull-strewn pack promised "Total terror," but after up trashing  
halls had fed the tape into the VCR I discovered that AXE was a film  
that had already been seen in the cinema as CALIFORNIA AXE MASSACRE  
with Robert Rossini's COMPIRE CHILDREN/THE CHILD - a multiplying  
double bill put together under the auspices of L.A. drive-in spec-  
taclester Henry B. Kovar. It had been equipped with a stellarly modest  
campaign in its theatrical incarnation. Its poster bearing the  
legend "More frightening than TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE" - a glowing  
testimonial was one inclined to take with a pinch of salt due to the  
fact that it was attributed to no-one in particular. "Total Terror"  
it ain't, what it is is one of those low budget exploitation where very  
flimsiness make it surprisingly seductive.

The pre-title sequence details the complicated double murder of  
two girls by three gangsters, the highlight of which is the forced  
consumption of a lit cigar by one of the victims. In the aftermath  
of this run-out the chief heavy declares that they'd better keep a  
low profile till the heat dies down. This they facilitate by shooting  
up a food cart. There's an laproptic food fight, then three desperate  
characters terrorize the checkout girl - they check out her charms  
and make with the Oscar Wilde type beltings about his nose. At the  
cinema there's a quick cut, but in the video version (thru minutes  
longer at 68 mins) the hapless shop-girl is stripped down to her  
underwear and subjected to a game of William Tell, pulling faces as a  
feminine attempt to convey terror, total or otherwise.

After this false start our desperados do indeed live low, kil-  
ling themselves up as isolated from inhabited by a young girl, Lisa,  
and her paralyzed uncle father. When the house had guy tries it on  
the rebelle his nervousness with a straight razor, puts his  
body in a bath and succumbs it with an axe. The same young one is  
used to cool out the second bad guy when he goes wandering head.  
Billy, the youngest and relatively sympathetic (because of his  
quiescent) villain, discovers the body in the bath and, to avoid becom-  
ing number three, he runs outside, straight into the cops who have  
turned up episode of nothing, and who gas him down with a stellarly  
effective antitoxin.

Spurious Lisa lies with what looks like blood but is hopefully  
toxic soap, to her feeble old man. Yep, she can look after dad, run  
a farm and see off big men. Can she's a woman. M-D-N-A-K...

If you've been keeping a running score you've probably come to  
the grand total of one axe killing, which is pretty short shift in  
as alleged Californian axe massacres. It was filmed in North Carolina  
to boot. I'm reminded of Voltaire's celebrated observation on the  
Holy Roman Empire, ("The Holy Roman Empire was neither holy, nor  
Roman, nor an empire") and since of going to see a "Triple Fritzel  
double bill" which disappointed due to the fact that Mr. Fritzel only  
appeared in one of the films!

Giving credit where it's due, Fred B. Friedel, who wrote, directed  
and edited AXE (as well as playing Billy) does his best with  
limited resources, but no-one seems to have been impressed enough to  
furnish Fred with the means to advance his career, as after AXE he  
went into obscurity. Total obscurity.

THIS EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW CONCLUDES IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF DAMIAN WITH  
BAMPER GIVING FASCINATING SUGGESTIONS 1970 HIS MORE, FROM THE EARLY  
SHORT STORIES THROUGH TO "OBSESSION" (INCLUDING HIS PSEUDONYMS  
NOVEL "CLASH" AND "WITCH OF THE CLASH").

OTHER SUBJECTS ON THE AGENDA ARE THE SOCIAL ROLE OF HORROR  
FICTION, RELIGION AND LIVERPOOL. - BE THERE!



BLOODY MOON s.b.s. DIE SARGE DES TODES  
1981 85 (60) minutes Courtlight

JESUS Franco s.b.s. Jean Frank, is not out to hide his light under a  
bushel! Between 1960 and 1981 alone he churned out 200 films, vi-  
tually back to back, among the out-pourings of this one-man film in-  
dustry is COUNTRY DECEIT (1970), apparently the version that is treated  
to New Yorker's original, which Christopher Lee claimed was his reason  
for appearing in it.

But Franco is better known for the likes of JACK THE RIPPER, THE  
KISS-ORIENTED COUNTRY, KISS ME HONEY and of course BLOODY MOON.  
his contribution to the Scotland Yard "Video Nasties" list. He seems to  
be a sort of bargain basement edition of his countryman Russel,  
obsessed with the conflict between the strictures of church and  
state on one hand and on the other the overwhelming power of the sex-  
ual drive, a conflict which in his films is usually resolved in a  
semi-masochistic compromise - in BLOODMAN, a story of glorio anti-  
editions stalked by a religious fanatic, one character orders her lover to  
"Crawl, you worm!". In his obsessive reworking of this theme  
Franco has descended from the domain of his name-nake the General, and  
the subsequent liberalisation of Spanish censorship, extending even to  
hardcore material.

BLOODY MOON, a German/Spanish co-production, begins at a lod-  
gious all-franco disco where gay cats are getting down to what sounds  
horribly like The Beatles. Couples are slinking off for a bit of  
post-path in the bush and the air is thick with such anticipation as  
"Just wait to see me" and "Caravan de gayly... everywhere." Then  
the blood-red Latin, "We see a shot of the scene that will precede  
all the killings and hear the words "Miguel, is your sister? Don't  
look at me that way! Go back to the dance!" Apparently not everyone  
is feeling nervous tonight.

Miguel contents himself with stalking first girls' unless then  
some guy's Mickey Mouse mask so that he can surreptitiously seduce  
said girl's girlfriend, at the height of her passion she rips the  
mask off to reveal Miguel's scabby face. What she means to do  
what any reasonable guy would do - he catches her up with a pair of  
scissors.

All this is filmed P.O.V. style, a la HALLOWEEN, so it comes as  
no great surprise when the next thing we see is one of those "Five  
years later" captions - Miguel is discharged from a hospital lurch into  
the care of his sister with the admonition "Be gay not be cured on  
you'll have to keep your eyes open... avoid tension or say reference  
to that unfortunate night." Given the procedure in Spain is somewhat  
less stringent than under our 1959 Mental Health Act. During his  
inconsequential Miguel's sick has grown to occupy about half of his  
face. Well that's what happens if you pick them.

Errected on this monomaniacal basic premise is a saga of intrigue  
over an inheritance at a mysterious language school on the coast,  
populated by, among others, a sinister shaven-browed pedagogue,  
Antonio the tennis star/sewer stork, the suspicious looking smoothie  
proprietor and a bunch of tedious girls who lust after Antonio's  
body and spend their time in perille discussions of their sexual ex-  
periences.

Meanwhile Miguel's deep sister is exciting him to the point  
where he loses control, growling and slobbering over her chunky legs.

"For five years I've thought of nothing but you" he bickers,  
"I've been the only one who never laughed at me." Start reading stuff,  
but when she tells him "Miguel, I'm a lesbian... I've decided I stay  
gay - remember what happened last time?" (the small matter of the  
Mickey Mouse mask homicide) "Can't you see they won't let us love  
each other... everyone around us is judging us... if we could just  
get rid of everyone." On a spate of "Creative deaths" to the accom-  
paniment of the growling electronic whining and farting sound-  
track L.F. the subset of all these cheap film sees how we recourse  
to get to get the sex of all flesh in the old lady whose soap is  
up for grabs, then one of the girls is stabbed in the back, the third  
entering through her left nipple. Her friend finds the body but allows  
herself to be convinced by Antonio that it's all a product of her  
wild imagination, illustrated by lurid paperback.

One of the girls trails the head of the language school to the sea  
front where he is involved in some shady transaction or other, a  
big piece of police drama masquerading as a thriller nearly falls on  
her head. She informs two other girls who but their response is not  
exactly the definition of crack line endorsement. "I wouldn't mind  
teaching her the language" says one. "Hey, you're on duty" his com-  
plicitous colleague retorts him.

When a girl is snatched by Miguel's sister's pet python, Arnold's dispassionate bit with the shears and we are treated to a shot of the scalp being thrashed around in a pool of reptilian blood, a handsome girl in a sash dancing around the bed moaning "Oh, he's so, clip up clothes off" for the benefit of those listening outside, but unfortunately they are also watching her solo performance through the window. This makes her so embarrassed that she fails to notice the shirt-wrapped cadaver in her wardrobe, the one with the lapel'd breast that mysteriously keeps turning up and disappearing all over the place.

One of the girls is taken by an unseen stranger to an old mill for a bit of kinky-pinky. A small boy (obviously a nephew in the making) seeks to after them to witness the highlight of the film so far as goreheads are concerned. The girl is lashed to a slab, though this doesn't stop her tolerable bawls - "You shouldn't use it so close to me - that's the cruelest thing they ever happened" (hyperbole surely). "...If that's the way you like it, oh, it's a bit painful" (silly) but I'll try anything - as long as I get back to the club on time! But it's a bit so hard, as poor backside is aching" (Well stop talking during it would!) "...But as they say, pain is good for pleasure, huh? I've always wanted to make it with a Spanish, they're so hot-blooded and imaginative, you never know what to expect - you don't have to do all this, you have it's not planning on treating any. I said I was gone for nothing, I have a weakness for strong men..." (and so on, ad nauseum).

Understandably infuriated by this incessant business rep, the unseen bondage fan starts at the buzzer that fastens prominently on the pack. The kill-jay kid runs in and turns it off but it is soon started again, and across the flow of verbal diarrhoea by seeing the head off a Burton's dump...or I mean, the hapless victim, Gus such squinting at tomato ketchup.

Meanwhile back at the language school the plot resolves itself, after a fashion, with some inconspicuous revelations about who inherits off whom. To nobody's great surprise the proprietor of the school is revealed as the killer, what's more Miguel's sister is revealed as his lover, and best of all, she reveals that she despises her brother and is disgusted by his strappings, following up with some catty observations about his complexion. Unfortunately Miguel has been seven-dropping on all this: Ducting off his chaise he releases his terminators to grunge party at gushing glistens.

This is the last one one for its systematic & very exposed stylization but it does impart some of the unique flavour of DECK-OUT NURS. All together now...."Fold a chicken in the air, attack a duck-chair at your nemesis..."

NEXT ISSUE: THE BURNING AND THE BOGEYMAN

By  
Philip  
Godfrey

## LIMBRACKINGUTWRENCHING SPLEENSPITTINGBRAINEATING FLESHCHEWINGBONECRUSHING... LONDON FILM FESTIVAL

ALTHOUGH film festivals are generally synonymous with tedious "Art" films, however third world movies and the latest "Masterpiece" from an overrated auteur, the London Film Festival always manages to sneak in a few horror films to liven up the proceedings. They usually tend to get shown either first thing in the morning or late at night, so if they were slightly disused, but at least the genre is not totally ignored.

This year three new American horror films were presented at the LFF: WAMP, CRITTERS and David Cronenberg's remake of THE FLY. Two other films of interest to SFFHOB readers, SHIVERS in HAWAII and Ben Russell's CYCLOPS, were also shown. I didn't see these unfortunately, though I was reliably informed that SHIVERS in HAWAII is a superb animated spoof of Bresson (as well as being a metaphorical take on the destruction of American capitalism - so there!).

Two of the three North American films (one mustn't forget that Cronenberg is Canadian) are first features for their respective directors. Before making WAMP Richard Weick had made one short feature DRACULA BITES THE RED APPLE, worked as production assistant on AMHIE, and had written two feature films (spoof novels). CRITTERS director Stephen Barker is a protégé of Roger Corman's (see HURD) (the next Joe Barts perhaps) having started out as apprentice editor on Art Joffe's BLOODBATH MASSACRE, and then graduating to chief editor on SPACE BARRAGE, ROYALTY AND HILLARY and Aaron Lipstadt's ANDREWS AND CITT LIVES. While working on this last film he met writer Dominic Muir and offered to rewrite a script of Muir's called CRITTERS on the condition that he get first crack at directing the film if the project was given the go-ahead.

David Cronenberg, of course, needs no introduction and neither does THE FLY, which has been eagerly awaited by horror fans since it was first announced a couple of years ago. I keep getting asked two questions about the film - "Is it better than the original?" (not a particularly difficult task) and "Is it really as gruesome as the Americans have claimed?" My answers are yes and yes or no, the director depending on whether you have seen any of Cronenberg's previous work. The fact factor is very high when compared to most average Hollywood product, but is no more gruesome than VIDEODROME or the early Canadian films. Cronenberg's films often seem worse than they really are, simply because they deal with such physical, bodily, horror.

This movie visceral punch is what disgusts so many people and yet it is exactly what makes Cronenberg one of today's greatest practitioners of horror cinema.

It is easy to see why he was drawn to Charles Pogue's script, for instead of the quick change of head and sex, presented in the original 1958 version, the central character gradually metamorphoses from man into fly, providing Cronenberg with a multitude of opportunities to indulge his fantasies.

The progressive transformation also means that we are able to identify with the central character to a much greater extent than was possible in the earlier FLY. Thus, whereas the 1958 film revealed under the wife, Nelson DeMusha, with husband head hiding under a sheet most of the time, the new version gives Seth Brundle (Jeff Goldblum) a much greater amount of screen time, providing a compelling character for girlfriend Veronica Quaife (Geena Davis) to interact with.

The relationship between the two central figures is handled superbly, providing the closest thing to a real romance ever seen in a Cronenberg movie. To a great extent this is due to first-rate

acting by both Goldblum and Davis under what must have been, judging by what is on screen, pretty difficult conditions. Jeff Goldblum is totally believable as the brilliant but highly strung and reclusive Brundle, providing the finest portrayal of a scientist/genius on film for a long time. Geena Davis (previously only seen in comedies) is perfect, and looks magnificent, as the world-wise science reporter who tags along with Brundle, looking for a good story, when he tells her he's invented something that will "Totally change the world." She provides a real core of "Heavenly" for the film, especially when Goldblum starts physically and mentally disintegrating during the second half.

The machine that will totally change the world turns out to be a sinister transporter that Brundle has invented as a potential answer to lifelong trouble with women sickness. Initially only inanimate objects can be teleported, but after the transporter of a human goes disastrously wrong he discovers a way to programme it to accept living flesh. All this is filmed by Davis, initially as a means to a career-making movie exclusive place in "Particle" magazine. Soon, however, she realises that what she's doing is heading for the war. It's intellectual prowess and emotional vulnerability, as to the work, and hell for her in a big way. Unfortunately Brundle finds her in the area of ex-lover and "Particle" editor Storch Borens (RUSSELL'SIPPLE's John Getz), and in a fit of jealous/desire rage teleports himself without supervision. As we all know a fly then enters the picture; the transporter is confused and apocalyptic a molecular/genetic recombinant of man and fly results - in Brundle's fly.

His first feeling is one of total elation; he claims to feel more human than ever and proves this by tearing his lab into a combined gossamer/bedroom extension. His ecstasy is short-lived, however, when he discovers that he was not alone in the transporter.

Chris (SCARLETT, GUNNING) takes special effects are brilliantly executed with both body make-up and excellent model work seamlessly integrated into the story. And so this is a Cronenberg film, there are plenty of obligatory gross-out scenes, including a particularly memorable, and meant to become infamous, vomit ritual!

One of the film's most touches is the elements of humor and satire that prevent the plot getting morbid or camp. One suspects there are remnants from Charles Pogue's original script, since Cronenberg is not renowned for providing a lot of laughs. Goldblum gets most of the best lines, as favorites being the description of his body as a left-over party as "The Brundle Menace of National History."

However the film is not without its faults and the major problem is its pacing; those of you reared on ALIENS and THE TERMINATOR will find the film lacking in drive, leaving a rather anti-climactic feeling when the tension should be at its height. This loss of momentum is one of Cronenberg's perennial problems which was most acutely felt in SCARLETT, though all his films have suffered from it to some extent. It may be down to the combination of overly complex story and intricate F/X sequences so beloved by the director.

Also THE FLY's third central character, Borens, is just too obvious in the early scenes, which makes his coming good at the end rather trite.

Although the combination is so more logical than in the original film a genetic combination of two such diverse species would just result in a dead animal; it is really life's worth questioning about; and neither are ex-gripes because THE FLY is a superb piece of SF/horror cinema that sustains Cronenberg's place as the genre's premier film maker.



DON'T BE FOOLED BY THE SMILE. ONE OF THE LOW-BUDGET CRITTERS.

You couldn't find horror films more different to *THE FLY* than the other two on show at the LFF. Their combined costs must have been rather less than half that of the Cronenberg film. Both are unassuming "B" movies whereas *THE FLY* is a megabuck epic with all the trimmings. Although they are no masterpieces, *VAMP* and *CRITTERS* would make a superb genre double-bill; they're totally unlike in terms of style and content yet they both provide 90 minutes of great entertainment.

*CRITTERS* is definitely the trashier of the two and, although *GREMLINS* is its most obvious source of inspiration, the film borrows liberally from a host of other films, especially the cheap and cheerful AIP movies of the fifties. The Critters, or Krites as they are officially called, originate on the maximum security Prison Asteroid Sector 17 from which they make their getaway at the beginning of the film. Before long its lunch-time and, like all "B" movie aliens, Middle America is their first stop. In a tip of the hat to *THE WIZARD OF OZ* they land in Kansas, near the farm of Mr. and Mrs. Average Brown and their two kids, pouting, passion-wracked teenager April and kid brother Brad (a homage to *THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW*?). Meanwhile back on the asteroid, prison commandant Warden Zant (remember *THE OUTER LIMITS*?) puts two chameleon-like bunny hunters on the Krites' trail and they are soon on the way to earth. One of them takes the appearance of a pop star, gleaned from pirated MTV signals; the other, torn with indecision, borrows the features of a variety of secondary characters, thus causing considerable confusion and giving the film makers an opportunity to provide some knockabout humour. The protagonists successfully make their way to the Brown's farm which becomes centre-stage in the confrontation, with the Krites in one corner and humans and bunny hunters in the other.

The film is definitely set in Spielberg territory; thus the kid brother runs out the big hero, saving everyone with nothing but his wits and BMX bike. Also the whole family runs through shaken but unscathed with only some animals, a cop and April's slimy boyfriend providing sparse morsels for the Krites.

The Critters, of course, are the stars of the show even though they remain patently ridiculous throughout. In motion they resemble large cotton wool balls, when poised for attack like a porcupine/Prince the shark hybrid - all explosive quills and slatp teeth. Because the Krites are so cartoonish in nature, director Herck plays them for maximum entertainment value, with the cast having great fun blasting the little buggers into smithereens. Their demise is often accompanied by noisy gibberish, translated at various points into profanities (via subtitles) much to the audience's amusement.

The cast do a tremendous job, considering the ludicrous premise, with Dee Wallace (Stone) cementing her position as the matriarch of eighties' fantasy cinema. It is also nice to see Don Oppenhein, playing the town idiot and a bunny hunter, a great character who's been seen far too infrequently since his brilliant starring debut in *ANDROID*. (Buffs will also notice the split-second clip from *ANDROID* early on in the film). With its well written script, non-stop action and unabashed good humour, *CRITTERS* is one of the best low-budget horror films of recent years.

*VAMP* slots in nicely somewhere in-between the other two films, being an expensive production from a relatively cheapskate company (New World). The film got excellent reviews and preview reaction in the States yet failed at the box office, which is difficult to understand because it contains all the elements needed for a big hit-likeable teenage leads, a good story, plenty of humour and excellent special effects courtesy of Greg (COCON) Cannon. The film also borrows liberally from a host of previous genre epics including

almost every previous vampire picture, with *FRIGHT NIGHT* being the most obvious inspiration.

It starts with two friends, Keith (Chris Makepeace) and A.J. (Robert Rusler) being hung, with the words "Welcome to your worst nightmare" booming over the soundtrack. This scene turns out to be part of a fraternity initiation rite being undertaken by the two college sophomores who decide halfway through, that anything (!) would be better than their current predicament. The frat brothers propose instead that they deliver the sexiest stripper they can find within a week.

After enlisting the help of campus financial whizz and general slutt Duncan (Gedde Watanabe) their quest eventually leads them to The After Dark Club (shades of *VAULT OF HORROR*), a sleazy strip-joint in the worst part of downtown LA. Unknown to them the manager and most of the employees are vampires, along with a substantial proportion of the local population. The only non-vampires are a local street gang (consisting of albino males and black females) who tide around in a hearse and run into our heroes at the most inopportune times.

After viewing the acts the three decide unanimously that Katrina (Grace Jones), the star attraction, is the one for them; this isn't at all surprising because her routine, clad only in metal underwear and body paint, smearing herself around a human figure prop-chair is quite astounding. A.J. is sent to her room to inquire after her services for their party; unfortunately she thinks that he is the hors d'oeuvre and gives him a toothy. When A.J. doesn't return Keith goes looking for him, assisted by Amnetto (Dedee Pfeiffer) a waitress at the club, who claims she knows Keith from "Way back." A.J. is soon discovered, as is his new-found undead status, and it's all action from here on as Keith and Amaretto try and worm their way out into the land of the living.

Once the film gets going it really is very exciting, with Keith moving from one trap, mugget, vampire to the next with nary a pause for breath. Both the photography and production design are excellent, giving the film a gloss unusual for a film with this small a budget. The finale with Keith trapped by Katrina in a cellar, and him finally getting the upper hand by smashing the roof and letting the light in, is especially well-shot.

Although the script forgoes logic very quickly, it at least maintains an internal consistency and rarely descends to a cheap joke or stock scare. Richard Wenk's direction is taut throughout, relishing the barrage of transformations, heart-rippings, strip tease sequences, jokes and goosepimpled shocks that keep you glued to your seats.

The strip-joint locale for the vampire hideout is also inspired: Wenk described the reasons for the choice of location in the LFF programme notes. "I figured that if vampires were alive today they would have gotten jobs where people came to them. A strip club seemed to fit the bill. At the very least it would keep them off the streets. The type of people who visit strip clubs are the perfect victims; salesmen and guys who find all money in by themselves. Nobody says 'Gee honey, I'm going down to the strip club.' These guys are not easily traced."

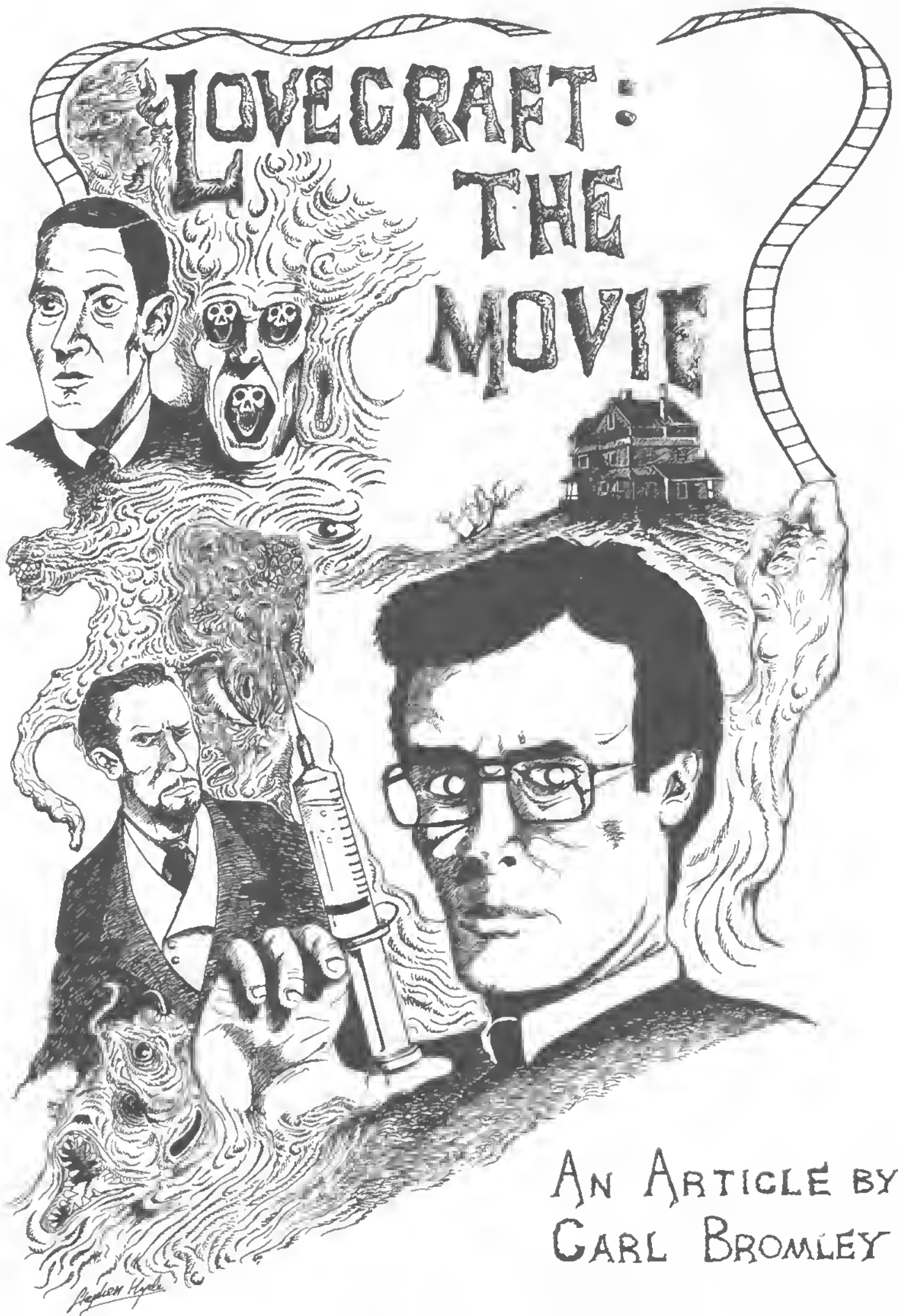
The acting is consistently good with Chris Makepeace providing the perfect combination of nerves and heroism; Dedee Pfeiffer, a delicious heroine, manages to tease Keith, and us, with the impression that she may be more than she seems, her attempts to get Keith to remember her real name provide an enjoyable running gag. Robert Rusler gets all the best lines and proves himself adept at both comedy and pathos. The dialogue between the two leading men, once A.J. is vampirised, is sparkling, an example being A.J.'s retort "I love you, but all I see is food!" Of course Grace Jones mustn't be forgotten; as Katrina she is stunningly sensual and as the vampire queen a hissing, cackling, hideous denizen of the undead (thanks to great makeup from Greg Cannon's FX group).

*VAMP* also contains many incidental delights; a skull sits at the bottom of a fish-tank in Katrina's dressing room, a vampire is killed by a pointed shoe-heel, Keith's unsuccessful attempt to kill A.J. with a stake made of formica and the club MC (Sandy Dennis, dreaming of stardom in Las Vegas) chewing on live cockroaches the same way the rest of us nibble on peanuts. Apart from some turgid teen comedy early on and Gedde Watanabe's rather irritating performance, the film is a total delight and should please all but the most demanding horror fans.



"OPEN WIDE PLEASE." DIRECTOR DAVID CRONENBERG IN A CAMEO AS A GYNACOLOGIST IN "THE FLY."

IT'S WHAT ALL THE BEST-DRESSED VAMPIRES ARE WEARING THIS YEAR, GRACE JONES IN "VAMP."



AN ARTICLE BY  
CARL BROMLEY

"Atmosphere is the all important thing, for the final criterion of authenticity is not the detailing of the plot but the creation of great sensation...we must judge a weird tale not by the mere mechanics of the plot...The true weird tale has something more than secret murder, bloody bones, or a sheeted form clanking chains according to rule. A certain atmosphere of breathless and unexplainable dread of outer, unknown forces must be present."

H.P. Lovecraft, SUPERNATURAL  
HORROR IN LITERATURE. 1933.

It seems to be a logical move when a film maker decides to adapt the work of H.P. Lovecraft, the works of Edgar Allan Poe and Stephen King seem to have been thoroughly exhausted, which leaves something in the range of 40 Lovecraft tales open to adaptation. Rather than literally adapting his stories it would seem more obvious to use events in his tales and recreate the all important atmosphere and imagery on celluloid.

If one is to read Lovecraft, it is the imagery and atmosphere within his tales rather than the actual storylines which remain memorable. The mysterious locations of Arkham, Dunwich and Innsmouth on the North East coast of the United States, the Great Old One Cthulhu and the ancient black tomes such as THE NECRONOMICON haunt the memory for a long, long time. Of course it goes without saying that Lovecraft wrote some memorable tales and has been correctly described in THE PENGUIN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HORROR AND THE SUPERNATURAL as "Among the most important authors of the twentieth century."

Lovecraft died in 1937. Why then did his work only start to be translated to the screen in the sixties? It was through the hard work of August Derleth that his work came to book form (he wrote mainly for pulp magazines) and his cult popularity arose in the late fifties, despite high status among fellow writers in the thirties. Roger Corman turned to Lovecraft after exhausting the possibilities of Poe but the first film to convey a truly Lovecraftian atmosphere, surprisingly enough was not based on a Lovecraft tale.

Made in 1959 and released in this country under the title of CITY OF THE DEAD (aka HORROR HOTEL) the story is a simplistic one telling the tale of a group of resurrected witches in Whitewood, Massachusetts (true Lovecraft country). Despite the film being a precursor to PSYCHO, in the way that the supposed heroine is knocked off half an hour into the proceedings, the primary importance of this low budget movie, and the reason it appears to be superior to other films of its type, is atmosphere. The small town of Whitewood is a derelict one, devoid of Christianity, constantly shrouded in fog, sinister solitary figures standing in the mist. The local graveyard contains the corpse of many a burnt witch, and at the witching hour ominous collectives of satanic worshippers meet at the cemetery.

Incredibly this effective little chiller, the first from Amicus films, was made for the paltry sum of \$45,000. The film's cheapness is reflected on the screen: the production is entirely studio bound, the actors imitate American accents (moderately successfully) and the cast is small. However the film's editing, moody monochrome photography and a gusto-filled performance from Patricia Jessel as a reincarnated witch makes this production a little gem of a B movie. To quote THE NURUM FILM ENCYCLOPEDIA: "The film has a beautifully eerie Lovecraftian atmosphere." It is surprising that producer Milton Subotsky never produced a Lovecraft anthology film bearing in mind his later productions.

The first official adaptation of Lovecraft was based on his short novel THE CASE OF CHARLES DEXTER WARD. It was made by Roger Corman during the latter part of his romance with Poe and to capitalise on this success was entitled EDGAR ALLAN POE'S THE HAUNTED PALACE (a poem featured in Poe's FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER). It is not only an admirable addition to Corman's Poe series but it is a worthy adaptation of Lovecraft's short novel, capturing the gloom and menace of the novel's imagery. An ancient curse hangs over Lovecraft's mythical town of Arkham (apparently in real life, Salem; Lovecraft, like Thomas Hardy liked to change place names) populated by mutants due to the town's practice of witchcraft many years ago. Vincent Price inherits the ancient Curwen home and deep in the bowels of this mansion lives one of Lovecraft's Elder Gods, whose demonic powers influence the homes inhabitor.

The film is beautifully designed, featuring superbly lush photography (a trademark of Corman's Poe films) capturing the mood of madness and obsession inherent in the novel. Unfortunately Price out-acts the rest of the cast (as in many of the films he has graced) and it seems that the low calibre of the supporting roles in this film re-occurs in the major roles in the following Lovecraft adaptations.

Although derived from Lovecraft the film is Poesque in its treatment of subject matters such as guilt and hereditary madness - a theme Lovecraft also incorporated in his tales. RATS IN THE WALLS being a good example.

The producers of the next four films discussed would have done well to have taken note of Lovecraft's comments on atmosphere (see head of article). It seems that the film companies producing horror films in the mid-sixties seriously misunderstood their audience. They believed that in order for a horror film to work (or make profit), the script had to contain a few routine shocks, a macho lead and a bland heroine (were the audience really meant to identify with these characters?), a reasonably well oiled plot, a tacky title and a well-known stalwart horror actor.

The next four movies all subscribe to this mentality. Obviously the scriptwriters decided that if a film was to work, it had to have a more substantial plot than the Lovecraft stories, so they invented totally new plots barely referring to their original source. They felt that they knew what to deliver and in their wisdom decided what audiences wanted were shabby monsters complemented by equally

shabby characters and incidents. These films feebly attempted to create atmosphere by using fog machines. They tried and failed.

Daniel Haller, an extremely able art director, proved his inadequacies as a director. The film DIE, MONSTER, DIE (aka MONSTER OF TERROR aka THE HOUSE AT THE END OF THE WORLD) was based on one of Lovecraft's best tales, THE COLOUR OUT OF SPACE. The film begins with our hero asking the locals where a certain mansion is. They all warn him off and treat him like a plague-carrier and after this extremely hackneyed opening the movie becomes an embarrassment of clichés, rising to the level of mediocrity one would expect. Genre regulars Boris Karloff and Patrick Magee are merely adequate and Wally (2001) Veevera's special effects a disappointment.



FREDA JACKSON LOOKING HER BEAST IN DIE, MONSTER DIE.

The location is changed from New England to a rural location in this country. All in all a poor effort in every way although it doesn't quite lower itself to the depths of THE SHUTTERED ROOM.

Supposedly set in New England, though filmed in Britain, and obviously too, this film contains the obligatory duo of lovers, though the story premise is interesting. A girl returns to her childhood dwelling, haunted by unpleasant memories of a particular shuttered room. This could be turned into an interesting psychological study. It isn't, and the result is a dull hokey thriller with only slight moments of directorial flare and atmosphere. The ruin-ation of this film is a performance from Oliver Reed, impersonating a streetwise American in the countryside and the familiarly bland romantic couple. The leading lady whimpers while our hero bravely beats up a gang of youths who have jumped him on a dusty path; naturally the hero comes out unscathed.

THE CRIMSON CULT (aka THE CURSE OF THE CRIMSON ALTAR aka THE CRIMSON ALTAR aka THE REINCARNATION aka SPIRIT OF THE DEAD!!) boasts a fine genre cast including the likes of Boris Karloff (inactive in a wheelchair), Christopher Lee, the lovely Barbara Steele and fine British actor of stage and screen, Michael Gough. With this and the attractive photography the film should deliver. However like the previous two films, it doesn't and for the same reason; it is sheer shtick exploitation; the gloss can't disguise the drab. The script offers up all the familiar clichés one would expect: a haunted house, demonic worship and black magic ceremonies yet all these "Attractions" fall to gel into a solid scenario. The scenes of demonic worship are embarrassingly infantile; interested on-lookers, a judge in a wig, a woman tied to a sacrificial altar, Barbara Steele painted green and a middle aged pot-bellied man in underpants fail to constitute horror. The S&M scenes (cut from U.S. prints) are shallow attempts in pure thoroughbred exploitation cinema which were expected to appeal to the sleaze audience. They merely add insult to injury.

THE DUNWICH HORROR, probably the most anthologised of Lovecraft's short stories, is a true classic. It is a well told tale with a haunting atmosphere which the film fails to capture though in fairness it does lack the banal mediocrity of the previous three efforts. Made in 1969 the movie moves at an acceptable pace, dropping the odd shock here and there and throwing in a few familiar themes before leading to an anti-climax.

Dean Stockwell (in a role originally to be essayed by The then hip Peter Fonda) with the help of The Necronomicon, plan to restore the Ancient Gods power back to earth, a diabolical plan which involves the sacrificial offering of Sandra Dee (also pretty hip then).

The film falls into the traps the previous three did but manages to sustain interest thanks to the atmosphere of the quiet town of Dunwich, some psychodell effects (also pretty hip then) and an interesting opening titles sequence.

Producers were obviously deceived by these feeble attempts at adapting Lovecraft's work and throughout the seventies preferred to excite audiences with 12-year-old girls masturbating with cum dildos and little boys causing their nannies to bang themselves at parties. During this fallow period Dario Argento expressed interest in doing a Cthulhu Mythos series and there was to be a film based by Paramount called CRY OF CTHULHU. It got no further than pre-production, though an excerpt from the story can be found in the December 1979 issue of HEAVY METAL.

Although there were no legitimate adaptations there were a few interesting pastiches of his work. Lucio Fulci made a name for himself turning out low-budget splatter feasts made in Italy with has-been actors. A prolific director for over three decades he has quite a cult following and as a general rule you either love or loathe his films. Suffice to say if you're looking for subtlety look elsewhere. Indeed my criticism of Fulci is his lack of which can border on the crude but then each to their own. His obsession with gore appears to weaken the structure of his work and with a little more care in the construction (and post-synching), perhaps his movies would prove more satisfying. Three of his films have an indirect connection with Lovecraft: CITY OF THE LIVING DEAD, THE BEYOND and HOUSE BY THE CEMETERY.

CITY OF THE LIVING DEAD has a beautifully atmospheric opening in which a priest commits suicide in Dunwich cemetery. The rest of the film is episodic and stagey, lacking any real pace and it is the scenes of unrelenting brutality that provoke interest (a woman vomiting up her intestines and having her head torn to shreds by a waddling, worm-eaten zombie) and the moody photography of apocalyptic Dunwich. There is also a black tome in the "Necronomicon" tradition. Like CITY, THE BEYOND is a set-piece movie which sustains an aura of pessimism throughout. The genre is well over the top, a typical example being when a guy falls off a ladder and bleeds to death in true Fulci fashion. However the opening scene where a hotel's former manager is crucified as a Satanist, while being very gruesome (cut from all British prints) has a disquieting quality. The film's premise is interesting: a woman inherits a hotel built on one of the Seven Gates of Hell. Prophecy has it that on an appointed day the damned will rise and take over the earth (this is written in the book of Elbon, a familiar tome used as reference in many of Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos tales). The ending's grimly witty twist makes THE BEYOND Fulci's best film.

THE HOUSE BY THE CEMETERY is chilling in certain set pieces, though the film is severely hampered by poor dubbing, clumsy construction, inane character names (Dr. Freudstein!) and some of its' themes could have done with some developing. It takes place in a suitably Lovecraftian mansion in New England and is spooky in places though it owes more to THE ANITVILLAGE HORROR tradition and Henry James than H.P. Lovecraft.

Sam Raimi's THE EVIL DEAD incorporates many Lovecraftian elements; ancient evil, black books, eerie woods which come alive and one man's fight against an army of hideous creatures. The film is constructed in a manner worthy of Lovecraft where the discovery of an ancient book (the book of the dead) releases creatures from Beyond. As an unofficial adaptation it probably captures Lovecraft's work better than all the others and what's more it's a damn fine movie.



YOU NEED HANDS. A SCENE FROM THE MOST LOVECRAFTIAN OF THE LOT, THE EVIL DEAD.

John Carpenter's THE THING has an interesting Lovecraftian concept of a shapechanger from another dimension wreaking havoc on human life while the creatures in Ivan Reitman's GHOSTBUSTERS owe much to Lovecraft as does the monster at the finale of the critically maligned HOWARD THE DUCK.

What did cause a resurgence of interest in Lovecraft was a little low budget exercise from Charles Band's Empire Films. The



HOLY SHIT! A LOVECRAFTIAN MONSTER. A SCENE FROM GHOSTBUSTERS.

film was produced by BOB FOSTER and produced by...

the wonderfully nasty RE-ANIMATOR.

Taking one of Lovecraft's lesser tales, "Herbert West Reanimator" which was a relatively straight-forward mad scientist tale, the scriptwriter condensed the tale from a couple of decades to a few weeks. Unlike previous adaptations the characterisation and acting is assured, never falling into blandness, and the film moves swiftly to a grand vulgar finish.



A TYPICALLY SUBTLE SCENE FROM RE-ANIMATOR.

The writers hoped to improve on the tale, updating the medical details and introducing a successful love interest. The use of gore is executed imaginatively, offering scores and laughter in equal measure and one wonders what Lovecraft's reaction would be to the evil Dr. Hill placing his own severed reanimated head between Barbara Crampton's legs!

The original tale isn't recognisably Lovecraft. Commissioned for a pittance by Home Brew magazine the story is very readable though the film is a grisly celebration of perversity with some neat one liners thrown in. The climactic battle where pandemonium is rife is more reminiscent of George A. Romero than H.P. Lovecraft.

FROM BEYOND seems to take RE-ANIMATOR's premise further, being higher budgeted with a cast that includes Ken Forre (DAWN OF THE DEAD) and RE-ANIMATOR's Jeffrey Combs and Barbara Crampton. A flop in the States it was promoted rather lacklily with Ms. Crampton appearing nude in PLAYBOY with the film's monsters. However it was well received by a number of American critics and should be on release over here in the next few months.

THE LURKING FEAR, again to be directed by Stuart Gordon, is in pre-production from Empire Films so lovers of Lovecraft lore and horror film gore should have something to look forward to there. It seems that the true potential of Lovecraft's work is about to be fully realised and I'm just counting the days until director Gordon has the chance to adapt some of Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos tales.



LAST THING IN THE BEYOND



THE AURUM FILM ENCYCLOPEDIA VOLUME 3: HORROR. Edited by Phil Hardy. (Aurum Press) £18.95.

At first glance £18.95 seems an awful lot to pay for a book but if you can also fork out the £17.95 for the companion SCIENCE FICTION volume (or £12.95 if you go for the reprint) you'll never need another horror film reference book again.

O.K. that's not strictly true as it does only cover films up to 1985 (indeed there are only three entries for that year: DAY OF THE DEAD, A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET and RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD) but prior to that you have virtually any horror film you care to mention from George Melies' 1896 THE HAUNTED CASTLE onwards. And this is where it is important to use the book as a companion piece to editor Phil Hardy's second volume of the Aurum Film Encyclopedia series, SCIENCE FICTION (incidentally volume one is devoted to westerns) as a number of films many would regard as horror movies are only covered in the science fiction volume, DAWN OF THE DEAD being one of the best examples. Another film I would have thought more suited to the horror volume is 1975's THE TERROR DR. CHANEY aka MANSION OF THE DOOMED from which, incidentally, came one of our mystery pictures in the first issue of SAMHAIN that foxed everyone.

Staying with the quibbles for a moment and a couple of the pictures are badly mis-captioned; Peter Cushing in DRACULA A.D. 1972 becomes "Christopher Lee as the scourge of the Victorian family" in Peter Sasdy's imaginative reinterpretation of the Dracula myth TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA" and a colour shot from THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN is credited to THE EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN but these really are minor criticisms of an otherwise excellent volume.

A massive 408 pages long its bulk comprises of a year by year listing of all horror movies complete with alternative titles, cast, credits and brief or lengthy review according to the importance of the film and all this illustrated with over 450 illustrations. In addition there are lists of all-time horror rental champs, critics' top tens, horror Oscars (a small list this one) and a selected bibliography which is always useful. All the films are indexed at the back, something a number of books annoyingly omit to do, and the index itself makes interesting reading. Did you know for example that there are over 30 films whose title begins with the word curae, come to think of it did you want to know that there are.....

As the definitive reference book on the subject (and it's British to boot) it would be nice if it could be updated regularly in some way other than just bringing out another expensive edition with a few extra pages tacked on the end. A magazine format would be the cheapest way from the point of view of the reader but presumably wouldn't be financially viable from the publisher's point of view which is a shame.

Future volumes of the Aurum Film Encyclopedia will cover thrillers, gangster movies and epics although whether or not a fantasy volume will be published remains to be seen. I certainly hope so as films like Ray Harryhausen's Sinbad movies don't really fall into either the horror or science fiction categories yet are still of great interest to lovers of both genres.

For the time being though no horror film fan should be without a copy of the horror volume...there can be only one...kill to get a copy if necessary.

And as a footnote to the review the book's editor, Phil Hardy, has asked us to ask you, the reader, to let us know if you find any errors in the book so that future editions can be corrected. Apparently one film is entered twice in the volume, though I must admit I couldn't spot it but if you can find any errors write to the SAMHAIN editorial address on page three and we'll pass them on to Phil Hardy. No prizes though, just the knowledge that you could be responsible for helping shape future editions, and hey...isn't that enough?

#### MONSTER AND HORROR MOVIES. Thomas G. Aylesworth (WH Smith) £6.95.

WH Smith may have refused to stock the now sadly defunct HALLS OF HORROR magazine but they can obviously see some mileage in horror as their publication of this book shows. Indeed they did a similar thing a few years ago with HORRORS A HISTORY OF HORROR MOVIES by Tom Hutchinson and Roy Pickard which also had WH Smith plastered all over the cover. Indeed both books are pretty similar; large format hardbacks with plenty of largish stills, some in colour, looking at the genre in a variety of sub-genre chapters with titles like "Servants of the devil" and "Back from the dead."

A nice cross section of stills takes in everything from Lon Chaney's PHANTOM OF THE OPERA to DAY OF THE DEAD and gore bounds

will no doubt appreciate the use of some colour scenes from FRIDAY THE 13TH and ALLEN to name but two. What particularly intrigued me were a couple of titles in the index; THE FINAL CONFLICT: DAMIEN ill and AMITYVILLE ill: THE DEMON, both new ones on me! If your tastes run more to pictures than text then you won't be disappointed with this one which offers good value at £6.95.

#### HORROR FILMS. Nigel Andrews (Admiral) £4.95.

At less than a fiver you can't really complain with this one (have you seen what a double issue of Cinefantastique will set you back, I had to mortgage the house to get the Psych issue) but like MONSTER AND HORROR MOVIES it's really just a collection of stills linked, this time with even fewer words, into a publication that's pleasing on the eye but doesn't do a lot to stimulate the old grey matter unlike certain fanzines I could mention but won't. There's a lot more colour in HORROR FILMS than in Thomas Aylesworth's book and a lot more gore as well including the famous/infamous brunch scene from ZOMBIE FLESH EATERS and a delightful piece of exposed brain from HOUSE BY THE CEMETERY but then Fangoria offers all this and more for a lot less than £4.95. Still, if you enjoy it you'll probably want to get the companion book, SCIENCE FICTION FILMS by Robin Cross also published by Admiral at £4.95.

#### THE DEAD THAT WALK. Leslie Halliwell. (Grafton) £12.95.

Lovers of the golden age of horror will lap up this book in which the author, recently retired as ITV film buyer, traces the cinematic careers of Count Dracula, the Frankenstein monster and the mummy, with a brief additional chapter on zombies thrown in for good measure. It should be pointed out that the emphasis is very much on the classics and films like DAWN OF THE DEAD are merely mentioned in passing so don't expect a splatter feast not that this is a criticism, far from it in fact.

The original Universal monster movies provide more than enough fascinating reading, especially in the use of extracts from original scripts including many scenes edited out of the likes of THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935) and FRANKENSTEIN: THE TRUE STORY (1973). Did you know, for example, that in THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN the Burgo-master was originally bumped off by the monster in a manner more in keeping with the actions of one Jason Vorhees as he drags the bumbling fool out through a window before finishing him off in the ensuing panic.

The three main chapters deal firstly with the literary origins of the particular "Dead" creature in question before going on to a detailed account of its career at Universal and a not-so-detailed account of the relevant Hammer horrors. It's a shame that Mr. Halliwell couldn't have devoted a bit more space to the latter but at least he does a better job than Denis Clift who, in his otherwise excellent A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF HORROR MOVIES, dismisses the works of Hammer in about two pages. "History" indeed!

But back to THE DEAD THAT WALK which is the first book in a series entitled "Halliwell's Moving Pictures", each book dealing with a particular aspect of the cinema that Mr. Halliwell has enjoyed. Amid the seemingly endless stream of coffee table picture books that choose to cover the whole horror film genre and in doing so say nothing new about their subject matter, it's nice to find a publication which takes just one aspect and gives it the in-depth treatment it deserves. Whatever you feel about Mr. Halliwell's opinions on film there's no denying that when it comes to the classics he knows his stuff and his style of writing is a nice combination of informative and entertaining. If you want the definitive book on Universal's Frankenstein series then I suggest you pick up a copy of Gregory William Mank's excellent IT'S ALIVE! but for a more general look at Universal's main monsters and, to an extent, Hammer's, then THE DEAD THAT WALK is the one for you. At £12.95 it's not cheap, I mean you'd rather have 13 copies of SAMHAIN wouldn't you, but compared to the likes of William K. Everson's MORE CLASSICS OF THE HORROR FILM (a collection of very nice large stills) which sells for £19.95, it's a bargain!



THE MAN THEY CALL, LESLIE HALLIWELL.



PSYCHO II (Universal) 35 minutes

a black screen. Silence. Suddenly an enigmatic voice booms out: "Here is no God!" So begins PSYCHO II, Norman Bates' third outing and, in some respects, the best yet, but only some!

With Hitchcock dead these past six years and Richard Franklin unavailable, who better to turn to as a director of Norman's latest travesties than Billy Norman himself, rather Anthony Perkins. On the whole, he makes a splendid job of it, but there are flaws with the film, one of which is the need to show the murders in explicit, gory detail, quite unnecessary in such a film of obvious craft and intelligence.

The film begins with a superbly crafted homage to Hitch's tower scene from the climax of PSYCHO. Disturbed man Norman (Glenn Shaeffer) is preparing to launch himself from the top (and no doubt sent her mother in the process) and, while others are trying to stop her, succeeds in killing off one of her clan by pushing her down the stairs. The credits then take place over shots of Norman leaving the camera, traveling up through the desert and eventually being given a lift by a travelling medicine, Boone, who is of the "Hide for a ride" mentality. He is thrown out in the pouring rain by him that night after failing to comply, and, as Jack would have it, turns up at Norman's father's place to book a room. Yes, the Bates Motel is back in business!

Already mentioned there are general analogies to Norm, in our very weird police player, and so the characters are all in place for the latest bloodbath. All except the reporter Tracy (Roberta Maxwell) who seems to interview Norman and is looking into Mrs. Spool's disappearance (remember her? The old school scene from the climax of PSYCHO II). For introduction in the diner is one of the highlights of the film as she is talking to Norman. Norman enters with waitress (Lindsay McLean, think about it!) looking a dead-ringer for Janet Leigh. Down goes the dialogue on the soundtrack, as comes pounding music and violent cross-cuts to the shower murder 26 years past, as Norman arrives at it again, concluding in a brilliantly-matched shot of the "Dead-eye" melting into Norman as she reaches for her suitcase.

Also, the film is rather short on screen like this one and also lacking this time round are the twists at every corner of the plot which solidified PSYCHO II. But back to the story: depressed man tries to commit suicide, fails, falls in love with Mum's boy who reciprocates her feelings and then things really start going wrong. Murders take place, bodies are disposed of in ice-machines, and all the while the local sheriff is standing up for our hero/villain to reporter/body body Tracy. Also, Boone is getting pretty close to meeting "Mother" in the flesh (in rather nice and honest) and the film builds up to a great climax of shock and tension along the way there is plenty of woe-bare black comedy and a few of the items are knock-outs, best of which occurs when Norman is in hospital after her suicide attempt apologizing to Norman for leaving the bathroom as a terrible man. "Oh no, I've seen it worse" replies Norman, after all!

Credit must be given to the photography of Bruce Surtees and the music of George Fennell (but yes I know he's still in it as Norman's brother, but his work like the images extremely well, most effective in quieter moments, e.g. the hospital scene or when Norman is walking to the cabin to meet Susan). On the whole



MURDER NORMAN BATES MADE IN ACTION IN PSYCHO II

though, whether twisting or slashing away at people as Norman or hiding away behind the camera, it is very much Perkins' film. He demonstrates a firm control over all the elements and provides a second sequel that, while not likely to displace Hitch's classic as the screen's most accomplished film of psychosis and black humor, stands on its own as a worthy close to a great horror trilogy. I say close to the hope that PSYCHO IV will not appear, as most film studios seem to think that to put good film into the ground is all the cinema-going public want these days. I would hate to see Norman plodding on relentlessly, Jason-style, and think that now, closing on the last delicious twist in the police car at the end of the film (giving new meaning to the phrase "Give me a hand, mother") would be as good a place as any to bow out. E.L.P. Norman Bates. We'll miss you... just!!

#### LARTRINTH (Tri-Star pictures) 95 minutes

Jennifer Connolly, SARTRINTH's somewhat small attractive person, has only just turned 16 and already she's worked with Sergio Leone, Robert De Niro, Carlo Argento and David Bowie. Here she sings "The Goblins", creepy-crawlies, running around in subterranean passages and hanging out with psychotic women far... or, Goblins, creepy-crawlies, running around in subterranean passages and hanging out with cute devils... oh yes, and David Bowie. Jack-busted, crammed indecently into a pair of tights, playing with his balls and wearing a fright wig in which he bears a striking resemblance to Page 3 girl Corinne Russell O.K., that's enough Page 3 girls for one issue - Ed.), the white one belts out several original tunes (not, alas, "The Laughing Gnome") and renders Jewish, or sorry, Jewish, the Goblins King, in the inevitable style that prompted one critic to remark that "as an actor, David Bowie has a great little talent for it."



JENNIFER CONNOLLY SINGS ONE-SCENE INTO THE WORLD OF THE LARTRINTH

LARTRINTH is a Froudean complex comprising elements of ALIVE THROUGH THE LIVING GLASS, THE WIZARD OF OZ, Disney's THE 101ST BIRD (notably in the "Fire Gang" sequence) and Brian Froud's previous collaboration with Jim Henson, THE DARK CRYSTAL. It's much better than CRYSTAL, having as it does a certain amount of plot, and it doesn't cash the viewer over the head with its underlying theme of a girl's sexual awakening, unlike Neil Jordan's execrable THE COMPANY OF WOLVES. However the combined talents of director Henson, Froud, ex-Flynn and arg-arg-guy Terry Jones, producer Lures, Bowie, the delightful Muriel Connolly, Trish Tim Connelly and all, can muster nothing more than a lightweight, over-the-top, escapist climax of which begin to fade like a fairy under a blast from Hoggle's sword as soon as one leaves the cinema - especially if the viewer finds the car he came in has been stolen while he was watching the film. I know, dear reader, because I was that viewer.

#### HOWARD... a NEW BASIS OF MIND (Universal) 90 minutes

From the people who brought you the world's only negative review of ALIEN we proudly present the GARDEN OF EDEN. Forget what you've read elsewhere. HOWARD is first rate escapist fun and for good measure it includes some truly remarkable stop-motion animation effects.

Following its directorship showing in the States the title was changed here from the original HOWARD THE ROCK (which still appears as the title) and all references to dorks were removed from the actual poster. The plot concerns a talking duck, mysteriously transported to earth and his village (led by the gorgeous Lee Remick) and get back to his own planet. However the real reason for SARTRINTH's release (apart from the fact that it's in the sub plot involving a woman being gradually taken over, QUANTUM EXPERIMENT-style, by an alien Dick Cavett, accidentally brought to earth in an abortive attempt to return Howard).

The scientist is wondering how much time (Jeffrey Jones) eventually takes into one of Industrial Light and Magic's best stop-motion creations, a crack between 1959's THE BLACK SCORPION and John Carpenter's THE THING and with the gateway to the stars opened up there's a whole host of the creatures heading earthwards hell bent on inevitable world domination. Needless to say they prove no match for the wise-cracking fool who after all has every reason to feel pleased with himself after getting Mr. Thompson into bed, and all that is a PG certificate film!



## GODILLA - THE LIVING BEINGS aka GODILLA 1985 (New World Video)

For the elaborate Steve Miner stop-motion effort but a New World/Toho collaboration. Godilla emerges from Tokyo bay to launch on a nuclear reactor (pretty topical huh?) and generally revert to the city-munching ways of his fellow beasts. It seems his recent guise as defender of mankind against monsters from outer space was something of an aberration in his career, or possibly one of his "new" dreams - in fact this is a remake of the original picture (it took 30 years of the Starline Superstar) misquoting an ex script.

Godilla is looking a bit poorly these days, and someone also looking a bit worse for wear in Raymond B. as reporter Steve Martin, here purely on nostalgic value, inserted into the western release prior as he was back in 1954. The military go to great lengths to locate Martin, but God knows why, all he does is stand around watching Godilla on TV, muttering "You really believe you can kill Godilla?" The Japanese Prime Minister having ordered the use of nuclear weapons, cadet rockets (you heard, cadet rockets) are fired down Godilla's throat to put him out of commission. The Scientist, just to be on the safe side, decide to nuke Tokyo anyway. The tanks bear their missile off with a touch of "Star Wars", but the resulting fall-out reveals Godilla, who has to be tipped down a hand-daddy erupting volcano. Burr solemnly intones the heart string-tugging (and gruesome, I'll bet) epitaph of "This strangely innocent and tragic monster."

Godilla is a victim of the modern movie age...I only want to read his name" (the king of the monsters as a creepy mixed-up kid), Godilla's personality is like film to Steven that I can remember is a long time. This is because his usual happy shenanigans have been curtailed in an attempt to make the film more "Adult" (or perhaps out of a recognition that kids these days are not so easily pleased).

Raymond B. Martin's special effects are quite impressive, especially scenes of Godilla under bombardment in Tokyo Bay. Weirdly, they appear to have reverted to the original movie's plot of firing Godilla at high speed to give a convincing impression of a lumbering bulk. The home sub-plot is feeble stuff, but generally better scripted and acted than before.

Director Rait Nishikubo (R.J. Sizer helmed the New World construction) is fiendly in the Toho world, sprinkling his film with split-screen effects, flashbacks to Godilla's previous exploits and carefully restrained use of military stock footage. But he keeps with Japan's increasingly outward-looking spirit, the film borrows from several occidental sources - the introduction quotes COMBATATION quoting ZORRO FLESH EATERS, and includes references to PRYDO and ALIEN (an extraordinary encounter with what appears to be Godilla's cousin), later on we get the obligatory "BIG BOSS" intro-art sequence, and the competition of the alien that accompanies Burr's final soliloquy is cribbed from the climax of CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND. Taking his cue from the Director, Hajime Kuroki comes up with a soundtrack that shamelessly replicates several moments from John Williams' scores.

Godilla, at 30, is getting a bit long in the tooth (literally!) and has something of a glazed expression in his eye (flickering shots of the unconcerning head are a big mistake) - over his lumbering stride is a pale shadow of his former self (but what comes from mauling cadet rockets!) At this stage in his career he should no longer be expected to carry a film on his own, and those of us who have thrilled to such from-for-wills as DESTROY ALL MONSTERS wouldn't want him to. After ALIEN and John Carpenter's THE THING, nobody is going to be scared by Godilla and by taking the character too seriously, dispensing with his jokey sequences, Toho and New World have thrown away his one remaining asset - his charm.

## THE TERMINATOR (Polygram)

A cheap and cheerful rip off of non-nuclear movies, especially THE TERMINATOR and the old classic itself, FRANKENSTEIN, the film's subtitle FRANKENSTEIN 80 gives some clue as to the intentions. The movie is actually rather better than expected, thanks to a healthy dollop of plot, emotion and pathos along with the action and gore. The cerebral characters, Carl Latham, the scientist, and his pregnant wife Lucius, manage to generate our sympathy for their predicament, thanks to good acting by David Melford and Teri Austin.

Lebanon, a scientist at Aerospace Research Corporation working on space-uit design, is deliberately and severely injured to an "accident" arranged by megamanager ABC boss Edna Meyer (Beverly Sussman). Being the remaining bit of Lebanon as a bee-whys builds a cyborg. However he fails to fit a remote control device and the uncontrolled violator goes on a killing spree. A mercenary, Hunter (Dan O'Neil looking good) is sent in to destroy him with Lucius as bait...

Although no masterpiece, the film provides 90 minutes of entertaining horror/sci-fi and is well worth a rental fee.

## HIGHLANDER (Cannon)

The rest of the haggis has been eaten, the cater has been tossed and the salt whisky drunk. For the SAMUEL office party to celebrate the release of HIGHLANDER the video was a great success. The film brought a divided reaction among critics. On the one hand the likes of Leslie Halliwell couldn't even follow the plot while on the other at least two members of the SAMUEL staff were so impressed that they set off for the Highlands to track down the various locations used in the film, damn how it they were also spotted doing something pretty wild with a sword in an enormous multi-storey car park one night but as it's sub Judice at the moment we won't really comment any further.

First enjoyment of the film really depends on your appreciation of director Russell Mulcahy's style which owes a great deal to the "Tale" pop movies he directed for the likes of Ultravox (reunited VERNON) and which he carried through to his impressive first feature, RAZORBACK (1984). As a debut film RAZORBACK (like Robert Marham's THE HITMAN) was a remarkable piece of film making and so it turned out HIGHLANDER lived up to all the pre-release hype heaped on its film shoulders.

Christopher Lambert (see line - see review) plays Connor MacLeod, a Scottish clansman blamed (or should that be cursed) with immortality who is destined to fight down the ages against other "immortals" until a time known as "The Gathering" when only two remain, and so two lives "There can be only one" doesn't go, one of the gods die! The time and place of "The Gathering" is 1986 Manhattan but Mulcahy goes back and forth between the centuries at every given opportunity so no moment you're peering up a fish tank in the present day and the next you're emerging in a 16th century Scottish Loch. Most disappointing but a treat to watch.

When we finally reach the film's climax the two remaining "immortals" are MacLeod and the Foxglove, a terrifying warrior whose idea of fun is to evening with page 1 girl (but he is... you're fired, M) Corinne Bailey followed by a spot of "She Not altogether" and then a leisurely drive home taking out on many pedestrians as he can. Con but it's fun being immortal.

Earlier in the film (about 400 years earlier to be precise) the Burgess put a swift end to Sean Connery's over-paid but ill-remembered cameo by decapitating him (the only way to kill an immortal).

And so the scene is set for the climactic battle which results in an appalling display of wires that exposed Lambert from the ceiling (everly with \$10m to spend they could have kept these hidden) and then the final revelation that "The Prime" the "immortals" were fighting for was nothing more than a piece in the Highlands and the ability to grow old...oh and power beyond imagination which, presumably because Sean Connery had bonded in his bill for a day's work, isn't shown.

Another Director whose work bears a strong resemblance to his video games is Tony T. G.W. Scott but whereas his THE HITMAN was nothing but one long west-oriental bore, HIGHLANDER is in a class of its own ranking along with Mulcahy's RAZORBACK as two of the better genre movies of recent years. It should be very interesting to see how he traces "RABBIT" which he has been signed up to direct. By the way, if you are ever in the Highlands you may be interested to know that the castle used in the film is Eilean Donnan Castle on the banks of Loch Duich in Ross-shire and the Loch where MacLeod discovers he is immortal is Loch Shiel at the Glasfannan Reservoir. All this information and a review, don't say we never give you anything and hey...remember it is better to have out than to find away!



"FOR THE JINTI" CHILLER (HARRIS) HARRIS FOR PARTIAL IN RUSSELL MULCAHY'S HIGHLANDER.

# HANDS OFF THIS ONE'S MINE!

IT'S no good trying to get Norman's copy of *SAMHAIN* issue one as he's holding on to it...isn't he won't even let another have a look. However there is an easier way of seeing just what you missed and that's by sending £1 (USA send £2 International Money Order) to: *SAMHAIN*, 19 Elm Grove Road, TORMHAM, GREY, NORWICH NR3 6EQ and in just a few days you could be reading about: THE LIVING DEAD AT THE MANCHESTER MURDER, THE FILMS OF DAVID CRONENBERG, THE FRIDAY THE 13TH SAGA, NORMAN KASLOW'S 1931 FRANKENSTEIN (INCLUDING THREE NEVER-BEFORE-PUBLISHED "CLIP" SCENES FROM THE FILM), THE ORIGINAL DRAGONS FROM MARS, THE BNC'S QUARTERMAST AND THE PIT, PORNOPHILIA, THE RITCHIE, ANTIPODOPHOBES BEAST AND ITS SQUEAL, ARMS, FALLOUT'S REVENGE, PLUTONCEST II and a whole lot more, not forgetting of course...*SAM HAIN* (THE BOXED ONE) ... Did we really get all of that into one issue? We sure as hell did! And if you want to make sure of getting the next issue of *SAMHAIN* then send £1 (USA send £2 International Money Order) to the above address and we will mail a copy to you as soon as it is published. Distribution is always a problem with any publishing venture so if you don't want to miss out on *SAMHAIN* 3 then order straight from us.

## WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT SAMHAIN

"TREMENDOUS... LITERATE..."

-CLIVE BARKER

"YOU'RE BREAKING THE LAW..."

- PAMELA ARMSTRONG

"EVEN MORE LIKE THE GOOD OLD DAYS THAN I REMEMBER..."

-KIM NEWMAN

"GIVE ME ONE..."

- SAMANTHA FOX

THERE CAN BE  
ONLY ONE !!

## NEXT ISSUE:??

THE CANNIBALS ARE OFF THE STREETS  
BUT THEY'RE LIKE IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF  
*SAMHAIN* ALONG WITH:  
THE SHINING,  
RAMSEY CAMPBELL,  
DAVID LYNCH,  
THE BURNING,  
AND OF COURSE... SAM HAIN.

ALL THIS AND MUCH MUCH MORE!!!

ON SALE MAY 1987